



THE KHYBER PASS.—(W. SIMPSON.)
(From a water-colour drawing in South Kensington Museum.)

TALES OF EARLY INDIA

From Vedic Times to Harsha



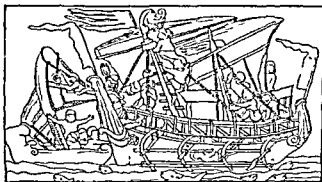
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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THIS little book does not pretend to be a History of India, even for the times with which it is concerned. It is an English reading-book, the subject-matter of which it is hoped will be found interesting to young people in India.

The writer is, of course, under great obligations to scholars whose painstaking researches and admirable exposition have done so much for the history of Ancient India. A complete list of authorities seems unnecessary, but he mentions with gratitude the following works :—

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| C. J. RAPSON | { | <i>The Cambridge History of India.</i>
Vol I, <i>Ancient India.</i> |
| VINCENT A. SMITH | { | <i>The Early History of India.</i> |
| RADHAKUMUND MOOREEJI | { | <i>A History of Indian Shipping
and Maritime Activity from the
Earliest Times</i> |
| V. KANAKASABHAI PILLAI | { | <i>The Tamils Eighteen Hundred
Years ago.</i> |
| J. W. McINDLE | { | (1) <i>Ancient India : Its Invasion
by Alexander the Great, (2) As
described in Classical Liter-
ature, (3) As described by
Megasthenes and Arrian.</i> |
| PRATAP CHANDRA ROY | { | <i>The Mahābhārata</i> |



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LANDMARKS OF INDIAN HISTORY

BOOK I

I. ABOUT DATES

ONE day an inspector of schools asked a boy to recite some verses from Gray's "Elegy." If you know the poem you will remember that it begins, "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day." If you do not know it, no matter; you are sure to read it some day. *How books are written* The boy recited very badly, and the inspector said, rather angrily, "Do you suppose that Gray took so much pains to write this beautiful poem for you to recite it like that?" The boy was astonished. "Did he take pains to write it?" he asked. "I thought poets wrote their poetry straight off because they could not help it." Now, the boy was not a stupid boy—he was really rather clever; and I dare say many people think that *not only* poetry but books in general are written without any particular trouble or thought. All the trouble the writer has is just moving his pen over the paper. I have no doubt some of you do write your compositions in that way. Well, when people write books they do have to take much trouble, and think about

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many things. One is, how many chapters there shall be in a book, and what each shall be about.

I thought a good deal about the chapters in this book, and decided that the first should be a chapter about dates, and here it is. You may find it dull. If you do, you can ask your teacher to let you go on to the next. I hope, however, you will read my chapter on dates at some time or other.

*Why this
chapter is
about dates*

You will easily guess that the dates in question are not the fruit of the date palm, but the much less pleasant things, dates in history. When you read a history book I dare say you pay as little attention to the dates in it as you can; but all the same they are very useful. You may think it does not really matter whether the first Battle of Panipat

*Years and
centuries*

was in 1526 or in 1525 or in 1527, and perhaps it does not; but it does matter that you should remember in what century this battle was fought, and whether it was early or late in the century. In this book you will find some dates of years, but more about centuries than years. This is partly because the book is about things that happened in India a very long time ago, and nobody knows the exact dates of many of them. It is also because the events have been chosen from a very long period, hundreds and hundreds of years.

You may ask, why bother even about centuries? There are two reasons why. First, that you may have some idea of how long ago each event happened; and second, that you may be helped to remember the order in which the events happened.

Now, of course, dates have to do with time. They tell us when things happened. When in a lesson you look at the clock you know how long the lesson has been going on, and how much more of it there is. If it is the first of January you know that you have still twelve months of the year before you. You know that in that year you will sit many hours in school, and also play many games of football and cricket and tennis. You probably remember something about the year before and less about the year before that, and something, but not much, about three or four still earlier years. You know that in so many more years, perhaps five or six, you will have been to college and finished your education. But if you think of the future in this way at all I do not suppose that you think very clearly. Five years seems a very long time, and it is hardly worth while thinking about what will happen at the end of it. Five years ago seems even longer, and it is no good to try and remember what happened then. If so, it must be very hard to think about hundreds of years.

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not, and perhaps all I can do is to point out the difficulty of thinking clearly about these long periods of time.

If you look on a little you will find that the next chapter is about the Rig-Veda. In this chapter I try to tell you something about the way of life of the Aryans in India when they first used its hymns in their worship of the gods. You may want to know how long ago this was. No certain answer can be given to this question, but it was long before the time of Asoka. It is enough for us that it was, therefore, not only hundreds but thousands of years ago. So you see that in my very first chapter I have had to speak of thousands of years.

*What the next
chapter is
about*

II. VEDIC TIMES.

Now you see you have come to the chapter about the Rig-Veda, and you will remember that it is to tell you a little about the people who first used its hymns in their worship. The first thing

I have to say about them is that they *The Aryans
mainly farmers* were mainly farmers, "a cheerful, in-

telligent people." They had herds of cattle, they ploughed the land and grew grain, they had gardens and orchards of fruit trees. Their cows were their great treasure: they compared the songs made to Indra to the lowing of cows to their calves; milk and things made from milk were their favourite food. The cows were kept in stalls at night, were sent out in the day time to graze in the woods and fields, and were milked three times a day. The bulls and oxen were used for ploughing and drawing carts. It is not known for certain what grain they grew—perhaps barley—nor what were their fruits. They lived in villages, each with an enclosure, or fort, where the people could defend themselves against enemies, or be safe from wild beasts or floods.

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villages jewellers who made ornaments of gold, metal workers, and carpenters who made carts and chariots. From all this you see that life in these very ancient times must have been not very different from what it is in villages to-day. There were differences, however. Towns, as we know them, did not exist, and without towns there was not much need for roads nor for travelling of any kind.

But though people could not go into towns to do their marketing, there was buying and selling.

Their trading It is true that coined money was not used, but gold and silver ornaments were used as we use money. The prices of things were, however, generally stated in cows. Not ten cows, they said, would buy an image of Indra. This means that more than ten would have to be paid.

There was another curious use of cows. If a man killed another he had to give to the dead man's family a hundred cows. Theft was a crime, but there were no police, and the man who had been robbed had to recover his property as best he could. One way was by keeping the thief bound till his family restored the property. There seems also to have been men trained to recover stolen cattle.

The government was carried on by kings. Their chief duty was to protect their people, and they were usually the leaders in war. King-
Their govern-ment ship was hereditary. Below the kings were the nobles, the Kshatriyas. Below these was the great body of freemen—farmers in peace, but warriors in time of war. There were

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but the Kshatriyas fought in chariots drawn by horses. A fighting man stood in each chariot with a driver on his right, who was as skilful and as brave as the warrior. The Aryans in Vedic times do not seem to have fought at all on horseback.

The Aryans lived in large families, several generations probably living together ; we do not know, however, how many. The head of the family had complete authority over its members, even of life and death, and he was the owner of the property of the family. As families increased in numbers the sons would set up separate houses and households, and so form a village, called *grama*.

*Their family
life*

The Aryans were very careful to perform all their religious duties. These included sacrifices of milk, grain and ghee, flesh, and soma, the sacred drink. Sacrifices and ceremonies were largely performed by the priests, the Brāhmins, but every Aryan was careful to perform his own daily worship.

The amusements of the Aryans were chariot racing, dicing, and dancing. One of the hymns is the lament of an unsuccessful dicer. He describes the gambler's passion : " When the brown dice thrown on the board have rattled, like a fond girl I seek the place of meeting. The gamester seeks the gambling-house, and wonders, his body all afire, Shall I be lucky ? " He concludes with wise advice, " Play not with dice : no, cultivate thy corn-land. Enjoy the gain, and deem that wealth sufficient."

Perhaps enough has been said to show that,

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although life in Vedic times was simple, the Aryans were already highly civilized. They had settled government, though not yet regular law courts; they were organized for war; they knew the necessary arts of peace; they respected family ties and their neighbour's right to life and property.

But we must not forget that the Veda was not composed to give us historical information. This comes in only, as it were, by accident in these hymns celebrating the praise of the gods. The following beautiful verses from one of the hymns may help to remind us of this :—

“Forth from the darkness in the region eastward this most
abundant splendid light hath mounted ;
Now verily the far-refulgent Mornings, daughters of Heaven,
bring welfare to the people.
The richly-coloured Dawns have mounted eastward, like
pillars planted at our sacrifices,
And, flushing far, splendid and purifying, unbarred the
portals of the fold of darkness ;
Dispelling gloom this day, the wealthy Mornings urge liberal
givers to present their treasures.
In the unlightened depth of darkness round them let niggard
traffickers sleep unawakened.
O goddesses, is this your car, I ask you, ancient this day,
or is it new, ye Mornings ? ”

A DISTANT VIEW OF THE HIMALAYAS.



III. THE ARYANS

IN the last chapter I spoke of those "cheerful, intelligent people" the Aryans as though they were old friends. So they ought to be, *Aryans both in India and in Europe* for both India and Europe owe to them the greater part of their civilization.

That is to say, that people in India and Europe still in many important ways think and act—have, in fact, the same customs—as their far-away forefathers the Aryans. In this chapter I am going to say something about how the Aryans came to be both in India and Europe.

Let us begin by comparing the map of India in very ancient times, on page 17, with a modern one, and see if we can learn anything *India long ago and now* by doing so. In the first place, we find in both maps the same seas, mountains, plains, and rivers. But even in this the maps are not quite the same, as some of the rivers have changed their courses. The names of countries in the maps differ very much, and also of towns, and there are fewer of these in the old map than in the new.

From these facts we may guess that India had fewer people in it in ancient times than at present. A great part of it must have been covered with jungle. We may suppose that people lived not

far from the rivers, and that their villages were separated from one another by waste land grown over with trees and bushes. Before the Aryans came the Dasyus must have lived much in this way.

But let us get on to the question of how the Aryans came to be in India. To answer this question we must first consider what the maps show as having remained the same—the mountains, plains, and rivers.

You know very well that India is shut in on the north-west, north, and north-east by great mountains, and is bounded on the south-west by the Arabian Sea and on the south-east by the Bay of Bengal. People coming into it from the rest of the world must, therefore, come by land over the mountains, or by sea. In ancient days there was much coming into India over the mountains of the north-west. Now, unless you have seen high mountains it is difficult to understand how hard it is to make your way over or among them. The highest are covered with snow throughout the year, and the lower are snow-clad for the winter. From the snows come torrents of ice-cold water, often rushing through deep ravines. The lower ranges are covered with impenetrable forests.

*India shut in
by mountains*

Men can only make their way through country like this with great difficulty. How great the difficulty was, you may judge from what the Chinese pilgrim, Fa Hien, tells us, long after Vedic times, about his journey. He had to cross the Desert of Gobi,

*Fa Hien's
difficulty in
reaching India*

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where, he says, "there are many evil demons and hot winds. Travellers who encounter them perish to a man. There is not a bird to be seen in the air above, nor an animal on the ground below. Though you look all round most earnestly to find where you can cross, you know not where to make your choice, the only mark and indication being the dry bones of the dead." Above the Indus he, with his little company, came to a great cliff. "When one approached the edge of it his eyes became unsteady; and if he wished to go forward in the same direction there was no place to put his foot. In former times men had chiselled paths along the rocks, and distributed ladders on the face of them, at the bottom of which was a suspension bridge of ropes, by which the river was crossed, its banks being there eighty paces apart." When the Aryans came, there were neither paths nor ladders nor bridges.

Later on the pilgrims had to cross what Fa Hien calls "the Little Snowy Mountains" on the way to the Kohat Pass. On the north side of the mountain they met a cold wind which made them shiver and become unable to speak. One of them, called Hwuy-King, could not go any farther. A white froth came from his mouth, and he said to Fa Hien, "I cannot live any longer. Do you immediately go away, that we may not all die here;" and with these words he died. With great difficulty they crossed the mountains, and came at length to Muttra, where Fa Hien considered that India really began.

There are two chief ways into India on the north-west, by the Bolan and Khyber Passes. The first leads from Kandahar into Sind, the second from Kabul into the Punjab. The Bolan does not concern us much, because people coming through it find beyond the Indus, between them and the rich plains of the Ganges, the Great Indian Desert.

*The chief
land ways
into India*

The way into India by the Khyber follows for most of the way the Kabul River. This river flows through an open valley till it reaches a point not very far from India. Then it turns north through a precipitous gorge. To avoid this a way was found over the mountains, and this is the celebrated Khyber Pass. In very ancient times this pass was not used. People followed the river right down to the Indus.

We do not know for how many thousands of years people have used this way from Afghanistan into India, but that there is such a way helps to explain why in Vedic times there were in the Punjab both Aryans and Dasyus. It is, moreover, quite clear from the Vedas that the Aryans were conquerors in the country, and that they had made many Dasyus their slaves. This being so, it is reasonable to suppose that the Aryans came into the Punjab from outside. Since there are Aryans also in Europe, it is thought that the original home of the Aryans was somewhere to the north-west of India. If so, those who came into India must have come from the north-west through the mountains, probably down the Kabul River from Afghanistan.

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They had not always been in Afghanistan, however; and perhaps you would like to know where they first came from. I wish I could tell you, but this is one of the things that no one knows for certain.

*The home of
the Aryans*

Another thing you may ask is why the Aryans did not stay in their own country. This is another thing that is not certainly known.

*Why they
left it*

We must suppose that they became so numerous that there was no longer room for them in their original home. We must not, however, imagine all the Aryans leaving their country at the same time and going to India. It was not so simple as that. When in their original home they had become so numerous that they had difficulty in finding enough food, a band of men with their women and children would set off to find land where they could live. Meanwhile at home numbers still continued to increase, and another band had to set off. Now this went on through hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. The Aryans, moreover, did not only go to India, but into most of the countries of Europe too, taking with them their language and civilization. You will find that to this day many words in European languages are really the same as in Sanskrit—for example, God, mother, father, cow.

The Aryans came first, then, to the plains of

*How they
spread through
India*

India in the Punjab, and that was where they were settled in Vedic times.

They did not stay there, however. The same causes that had led them to leave their original home in the north-west made them press

on into the heart of India. They were prevented from going from the Punjab due south by the Great Indian Desert and the Aravalli Hills, which, although they are not high, were covered with dense forest. To the south-east, however, between the Aravalli Hills and the Himalayas there is an easy way from the Punjab into the plains of the Jumna and Ganges, and this way the Aryans took, coming first to the country round what is now Delhi. Thence they spread over the land now included in the United Provinces, Behar, and Rajputana.

What do you suppose the Dasyus already living in these lands thought of these strangers, with their light colour, their strange cus-

and snow, or through rain, over rocks and through thick forests, and fording rushing torrents. Many of them must have died by the way. The consequence was that Aryans were often glad to take Dasyu wives, and this, of course, helped to make the two races friendly.

We have seen that the Vedas give us information about the way of life of the Aryans in the Punjab. There are two very celebrated poems, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyāna, from which we learn much of the Aryans after they had established themselves in Hindustan. The first, as everybody knows, relates the great war between the Kauravas and the Pāndavas, and the events that led up to and followed it. It is so interesting that in the following chapters I have tried to give in a very short form an account of the events that led up to the war, and of some of the incidents in the war itself.

IV. THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

(1) ORIGIN OF THE KAURAVAS AND PĀNDAVAS

THE main subject of the Mahābhārata is the great war between the Kauravas and the Pāndavas, the rival branches of the royal family of Bhārata which ruled over the Kurus.* *Main subject of the epic*
You will remember that it was Vasistha, priest to a Bhārata king, who composed hymns in the Rig-Veda about the Battle of the Ten Kings.

To understand how there came to be division in the Kuru royal family, I must begin with King Sāntanu, "a monarch known in all the world for his wisdom, virtues, and truthfulness of speech." He was separated from King Bhārata by many generations, and the very recitation of the genealogies of the kings of the Bhārata line is a great act of propitiation.

One day Sāntanu, out hunting, was wandering on the banks of the Ganges when he met a beautiful maiden. This was the goddess Gangā in earthly form, and she became the king's wife. *Sāntanu and Gangā*
Eight sons she had, but only the eighth lived upon earth. He was the hero Devaratna, afterwards known as Bishma.

* The country of the Kurus was on the upper waters of the Jamna and Ganges, and their capital, Hastināpura, was not far from the modern Meerut.

Sāntanu, thus left with only one son, feared that the chances of pestilence or battle might leave him childless. Moreover he desired to marry a lovely maiden whom he had met. *Satyavati and her sons* Now this maiden, named Satyavati, was a fisherman's daughter, and, to acquire religious merit, used to row a ferry-boat across the Jumna. You would think that a maiden so lowly born would have gladly married a king. But no. Neither she nor her father would consent except on condition that her son should succeed to the kingdom. Sāntanu put the case before Devaratra, who consented to be himself deprived of the heirship; and even took an oath never to marry, lest any son of his should become a rival with one of Satyavati's. And this oath he nobly kept throughout his life. *Bishma's oath*

Satyavati had two sons, and after the death of Sāntanu and of the elder of Satyavati's sons in battle, the younger, Vichitravirya, became king, "and, under the command of Bishma, ruled the ancestral kingdom."

Bishma was anxious to find a suitable wife for Vichitravirya, and therefore attended the Swayamvara* of the three daughters of the King of Kāsi, now Benares. There he suddenly seized the three princesses, taking them up on his chariot. He then made a speech, in which he described the eight kinds of marriage, and declared that the sages have said that "a wife is dearly to be prized

* The free choice by a princess of a husband from a number of competing princes.



BISHMA ENTHRONED

who is taken away by force," and that therefore he meant to bear away these maidens by force. The assembled kings resisted him, and there was a great fight, in which Bishma was victorious.

The eldest of the princesses explained to Bishma that her heart had already been given to another. The hero, "conversant as he was with the rules of virtue," let her do as she liked, but the other two princesses were duly married to Vichitravirya. They lived with him in great happiness for seven years, when he died.

Then the kingdom was left without an heir. Bishma then acted in accordance with the precepts of Manu, and arranged marriages for the widows with the Rishi Vyasa, who was the dead king's half-brother. From these marriages there were two sons. The elder was Dhritarāshtra, who was born blind, because his mother feared to look upon the sage, "with his dark visage, his matted locks of copper hue, his blazing eyes, and his grim beard." The younger was Pāndu ("the Pale"), because his mother turned pale at the sight of Vyasa. These became the fathers of the Kauravas and Pāndavas respectively.

Bishma arranged for Dhritarāshtra a marriage with a princess of Gandhāra.* Her father at first objected on account of the bridegroom's blindness; but reflecting on the blood of the Kurus, their fame, and behaviour, he consented. From love and respect to Dhritarāshtra, the princess went to him with her eyes bandaged with many folds of cloth. By

*Births of
Dhritarāshtra
and Pāndu*

*Origin of the
Kauravas and
Pāndavas*

* Gandhāra was a kingdom on the upper waters of the Indus.

the grace of Siva she became the mother of a hundred sons, of whom Duryodhana was the eldest, and all of whose names are recited in the epic. Pāndu was married to Pritha, daughter of Kuntibhoja, from whom she is often called Kunti. She chose Pāndu for her husband at her Swayamvara. Her sons were Yudhishthira, Bhima, and Arjuna. But King Pāndu had another wife, Mādri, daughter of the King of Mādra,* and her sons were the twins Nakula and Sāhādeva. Of all these cousins Yudhishthira was the eldest, Duryodhana having been born at the same time as Bhima.

Now Pāndu, owing to Dhritarāshtra's blindness, ruled the kingdom with the advice of Bishma. Moreover, Pāndu was a great conqueror. He subdued all the neighbouring kingdoms, and even fought *Pāndu's
glorious reign* against and slew the King of Magadha, and "took everything in his treasury, and also vehicles and draught animals without number." Then he returned in triumph to Hastināpura, his capital, followed by carts loaded with treasure, and multitudes of elephants, horses, cattle, and camels. This wealth, at the order of Dhritarāshtra, he distributed among their family, their brother Bishma, their grandmother Satyawati, and their mothers, the two princesses of Benares.

Not long after this Pāndu retired into the jungle. There, with his wives Kunti and Mādri, he lived the religious life, robed in the bark of trees, eating fruits and roots, exposing himself to heat and cold, and giving himself up to contemplation.

* Mādra is what is now the central part of the Punjab.



THE SOURCE OF THE GANGES.

So it happened that the Pāndavas were born in the forests, and that Pāndu and Mādri died there. Their bodies were, however, brought to Hastināpura by Kunti, helped by the Rishis among whom they had lived in the jungle. At Hastināpura a great multitude came out to meet them, both of Kshatriyas and Brāhmans with their wives, and of Vaisyas and Sudras, and the funeral rites of Pāndu and Mādri were performed in the midst of this weeping multitude.

*Deaths of
Pāndu and
Mādri*

(2) UPBRINGING OF THE KAURAVAS AND PĀNDAVAS

After Pāndu's death the hundred and five cousins, the Kauravas and the Pāndavas, lived together at Hastināpura, under the care of Dhritarāshtra and Bishma. Great care was taken of their education. Bishma chose as their teacher Drona, because he was not only skilled in the Vedas, but also a perfect master of the science of arms. Others also came to Drona for training; and among them Karna, who had been adopted by a chariot driver and his wife, but who was a hero, and became as famous a warrior as any of the princes his companions.

*Kauravas and
Pāndavas
instructed by
Drona*

Drona then taught all these princes and heroes; but among them all, Arjuna was his favourite pupil. One day Drona set up on the top of a tree, as a mark for the princes to shoot at, an artificial bird, and told them to stand with their bows ready to shoot at

*How he
taught them
to shoot*

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the mark when he gave the word. When all were standing aiming at the bird he called upon Yudhishtira, and asked him whether he beheld the bird at the top of the tree; and when he said "Yes," Drona asked him whether he also saw his tutor, his brothers, and the tree. Yudhishtira answered, "I see the tree, thyself, and my brothers." Drona asked the others in turn what they saw, and they all answered in the same way, except Arjuna, who said, "I see the bird only, but not the tree nor thyself." "Describe the bird to me," said Drona; but Arjuna replied, "I see only the head of the bird, not its body." Drona was delighted. "Shoot," said he; and immediately Arjuna shot, and his arrow struck off the head of the bird. In this way Drona taught his pupils to concentrate their minds.

But although all these princes lived and learnt together it must not be supposed that there was no ill-feeling among them. There was great jealousy of the Pāṇḍavas in the hearts of the Kauravas, because Duryodhana was younger than Yudhishtira, and feared that the kingdom would go to the son of Pāṇḍu. Moreover, Duryodhana was very jealous of Bhīma, because they were of the same age and Bhīma was his great rival in bodily strength. So jealous was he that he had even tried to poison and to drown Bhīma.

At length the time came when Drona could say to King Dhritarāshtra, "Thy children have completed their education; let them now show

what they can do." The king joyfully consented; and a day was fixed, and platforms set up, surrounded with seats for men of every degree, and a pavilion for the ladies. *The tournament*

The first test was in shooting, both on foot and from horseback, and in this all showed marvellous skill. Next came fighting with sword and buckler; and when Duryodhana and Bhima appeared as opponents, great was the excitement; and some cried, "Behold the heroic king of the Kurus!" and others, "Behold Bhima!" so that, fearing a tumult if either prince were defeated, Drona caused the combat to stop. Then came forward Arjuna to show feats with the bow, and again great shouts were heard: "This is the graceful son of Kunti! this is the third Pāndava! this is the son of the mighty Indra! this is the protection of the Kurus!" Then Arjuna performed many feats, ending by shooting one-and-twenty arrows into the hollow of a cow's horn swaying at the end of a rope.

When Arjuna had ended, suddenly appeared Karna, a hero like the rest, and in stature, strength, and skill second to none. He bowed indifferently to Drona, and, addressing Arjuna, said, "I shall perform feats before this gazing multitude *which* all that thou hast done." The joy of Duryodhana may be imagined, especially as Karna was as good as his word, and did all that Arjuna had done. The Kuru princes embraced him with joy, and hailed him as one of themselves, and Karna in return demanded to meet Arjuna in single combat.

Now Karna, though he was supposed to be only the son of a simple charioteer, was known to Kunti as her son by Surya, the Sun God, and she swooned with horror at the idea of her two sons meeting in deadly combat. At the last moment, however, Drona's son Kripa intervened. "The royal birth of the Pāndava," said he, "is well known; but who, O Karna, art thou? Of what royal line art thou the ornament? Satisfy us that thy rank is such as to make thee a fit antagonist for the noble Arjuna." Karna became "pale as a lotus drenched with autumn rains," but Duryodhana intervened,

and declared that he would make

*Karna made
King of Anga*

Karna equal with Arjuna by crowning him on the spot King of Anga. This

was immediately done. But when Karna's father, the charioteer, came forward to rejoice over his son, Bhima taunted Karna with his lowly birth, and Duryodhana warmly defended him; and in the midst of their revilings the sun set, and there was no combat after all.

Drona having completed his work, demanded his fee, which was the person of his ancient enemy,

*Drona receives
his fee*

King Drupada of Pāñchāla. The Kauravas and Pāndavas accordingly invaded Pāñchāla; but only when the

Kauravas were getting the worst of it did the Pāndavas intervene, and it was due to their valour, and in particular to Arjuna's, that Drupada was captured and his capital laid waste. Drona magnanimously released Drupada, but took from him half his kingdom, the country of the Northern Pāñchālas.

(3) DRAUPADI'S SWAYAMVARA AND THE
DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

Soon after the war against Drupada, Dhritarāshtra for his people's good made Yudhishtira his heir-apparent. But he was, notwithstanding, exceedingly jealous of the might and authority of his nephews, and passed sleepless nights in anxiety for the future of the kingdom. The people ardently desired to have Yudhishtira for king, and Duryodhana was as determined to be king himself. Dhritarāshtra secretly favoured his own son, Duryodhana, but he feared the people. He advised Duryodhana to trust to statecraft to make himself king in the end. Duryodhana, however, thought he had found a better way. He had a house built, called the House of Lac, and in this Kuntī and her sons lived. One night Duryodhana had this house set on fire.

*Yudhishtira
and Duryo-
dhana rivals for
the kingdom*

*The House
of Lac*

such beauty and intelligence that she resembled a real daughter of the celestials born among men.

Draupadi's Swayamvara The time came for this lady's Swayamvara, and to it were invited all the neighbouring princes. Drupada, however, had for long desired that Draupadi might wed Arjuna. He therefore had a bow made that no one weaker than Arjuna could string, and a mark set up that no one less skillful than Arjuna could hit, and made stringing the bow and hitting the mark conditions of becoming his son-in-law.

The Pāndavas, still disguised as Rishis, made their way to Pāñchāla, and lived there in the house of a potter. The Swayamvara was to be held in a vast amphitheatre surrounded with glittering white platforms adorned with gold and jewels and shaded by silken canopies. And these platforms were filled with a vast concourse of people of all ranks, and among the Brāhmans sat the Pāndavas with the matted hair and rough garments of mendicants.

One prince after another came forward to string the bow, but all failed, some of them being thrown to the ground by the force of the recoil. At last came Karna. He strung the bow, and fitted an arrow to the string, but Draupadi cried with a loud voice, "I choose no low-born man for my lord." Then Karna, laughing in vexation, and casting a glance on the Sun, threw aside the bow, already drawn to a circle.

Then Arjuna approached the bow, and a great

hubbub arose among the Brāhmans. Some wished to prevent him, thinking that his failure would bring upon them ridicule and disgrace, but others noted his powerful shoulders, *Arjuna bends the bow* arms, and thighs, and his resolute bearing. Arjuna strung the bow in a twinkling, and shot the five arrows through the whirling discus straight to the mark. Then through the hosts of Brāhmans, waving their upper cloths in the air and shouting with joy, while the music sounded and flowers were showered all *Draupadi's choice* over the amphitheatre, Draupadi advanced, and, as sign of her choice, threw a white robe and a garland of flowers around Arjuna.

The assembled kings and princes were infuriated. "A Swayamvara is," they said, "for Kshatriyas. It is true the insolent Brāhman cannot *Contest between Kshatriyas and Brāhmans* be slain, but we will be avenged on Drupada, who has cast this slight upon us." And they closed in on the hapless king, who would have perished miserably if Bhima had not torn up by its roots a tree and stripped it of its leaves, and stood ready to defend Drupada. But godlike Krishna, chief of the Yādavas,* interposed. "Who can doubt," said he, "that this mighty bowman is Arjuna, and this hero with the strength of an elephant is Bhima? And, lo! there are the twins, sons of Mādri; and the beautiful youth of great stature and fair complexion, who but now left the amphitheatre, is Yudhishtira." The Kshatriyas would not yield without a fight; but

* The Yādavas' country was south of the land of the Kurus, and their capital was Mathurā, modern Muttra, where Krishna was born.

eventually Krishna induced them to give up their opposition. He pointed out that Draupadi had been fairly won, and had signified her choice. Kunti and the Pāndavas returned to the potter's house; and to this house came *Krishna visits the Pāndavas* later in the evening Krishna, chief of the Yādavas, and became from this time the great supporter of the Pāndavas, as Karna was of the Kauravas.

The news of the result of Draupadi's Swayamvara spread through Āryāvarta. Dhritarāshtra *Anger of the Kauravas at Draupadi's choice* was one of the last to hear it. In fact, he had given orders for ornaments to be made for Draupadi, because he believed that she had chosen Duryodhana. This prince, his father, and brothers were seized with fear and anger when they realized the truth. Not only had they lost the beautiful Draupadi, but the Pāndavas were now in alliance with the powerful kingdom of Pāṇchāla. Duryodhana put forward many plans for their ruin, such as stirring up dissension between the sons of Kunti and those of Mādri, or bribing Drupada and his ministers to desert the Pāndavas. The high-souled Bishma refused to have anything to do with such wicked schemes. He pointed out that Dhritarāshtra and Pāndu were both his nephews, and that he was equally bound to protect the sons of each, the Kauravas and the Pāndavas.

They had equal claims to the kingdom of the Kurus, and the only fair arrangement was, therefore, a division of the kingdom. In this he was supported by Drona. Karna, however, spoke



THE INSTALLATION OF YUDHISHTHIRA.

against these two with great bitterness. "It is ridiculous," he said, "that men who have received favours and wealth at Dhritarāshtra's hands should give him advice that is not for his good." The wise Vidura warmly supported the policy of Bishma, which he said would safeguard the Kuru race and the whole Kshatriya order. In the end Bishma prevailed, and Vidura was sent to invite the Pāndavas to Hastināpura. The invitation was accepted. The Pāndavas were welcomed by the people of the capital, who said, "Let them stay in our town for a hundred years," and by Dhritarāshtra and Bishma. But Duryodhana and his brothers sulked in their houses. The division of the kingdom was arranged, and the Pāndavas built a magnificent capital and called it Indraprastha.

(4) THE GAMBLING

For many years Yudhishtira ruled the kingdom with wisdom and justice, and its powers increased so that his four brothers were able to make conquering expeditions: Arjuna to the north, Bhima to the east, Sāhadeva to the south, and Nakula to the west. They all returned victorious to Indraprastha with immense wealth. In those days there were neither droughts nor floods, plagues nor fires; the very robbers and cheats ceased to be liars, and, still more wonderful, the courtiers of the king became truthful. Moreover, agriculture and trade prospered.

The conquests of the Pāndavas and the prosperity of their kingdom

Then the king, glorying in his prosperity, and with the advice of the godlike Krishna, resolved to celebrate the Rājasuya sacrifice, and thereby to declare himself emperor over all the kings of ancient India. *Yudhishthira's Rājasuya sacrifice and its consequences* To this sacrifice the King of the Kurus, Bishma, Duryodhana, and all his brothers were invited; and all attended, together with a great concourse of kings, among whom were Krishna and Sisupala, King of Chedi.

The Pāndavas showed the greatest honour to godlike Krishna, and against this Sisupala insolently protested. He paid for his impiety with his life, for Krishna arose, and, hurling a discus, severed Sisupala's head from his body.

From this Rājasuya sacrifice two things resulted. Firstly, it united more closely than ever Krishna and the Pāndavas; and, secondly, it made Duryodhana and his brothers more jealous than ever of the Pāndavas. Duryodhana, in fact, said, "Being filled with jealousy, I am being dried up like a shallow tank in the summer season." But he knew that, even with the help of Karna, the Kauravas could not overcome the Pāndavas in battle.

Sakuni, the Prince of Gandhāra, was Duryodhana's brother-in-law. He was an expert gambler—that is, he was skilful in cheating at dice—and he suggested to Duryodhana *Sakuni proposes a gambling match* a way in which he could ruin the Pāndavas without fighting them. "Invite them," he said, "to a game of dice."

The scheme was opposed by Dhritarāshtra and also by Vidura; but the king finally gave way to



THE GAMBLING.

the passionate entreaties of Duryodhana, who again and again threatened to kill himself, and the invitation was conveyed to the Pāndavas by Vidura.

Yudhishtira knew perfectly well that he could not expect fair play from Sakuni, and that he himself was not good at the game; but, bound by the Kshatriya maxim, "No gentleman can refuse to fight or gamble when challenged," he accepted the invi-

tation, and the Pāṇdavas, accompanied by their mother and Draupadī, set off for Hastināpura.

Here great preparations had been made. A special gambling hall had been erected, and a great assemblage of kings and princes invited to be present. The Pāṇdavas were received with much outward friendliness. There was a feast on the evening of their arrival, and next morning all assembled in the gambling hall.

Before the play began there was a discussion about cheating at dice. Sakuni argued that it was simply like using stratagems in war. Yudhishtira denied this, and *The gambling* the gambling seems to have begun on the understanding that Sakuni would use all the tricks he knew, while Yudhishtira would play fair.

The result could not be doubtful. Yudhishtira staked and lost his gold and jewels, his horses and elephants, and his slaves. Then Vidura appealed to Dhritarāshtra to stop the play. He pointed out the folly and wickedness of gambling, and particularly of one branch of a family seeking to ruin another. He showed Dhritarāshtra how much more valuable to him the friendship of the Pāṇdavas would be than their wealth. Duryodhana answered him with anger and scorn, and Sakuni asked Yudhishtira whether he had anything more to stake. And he staked his whole kingdom and all that it contained, and lost; and then, one by one, his brothers, beginning with the youngest, Nakulu, and lost them one by one: and, when Sakuni taunted him with having lost everything, staked himself,

and lost. Then Sakuni again taunted him, saying, "Shame on thee for having staked and lost thyself while thou still hast wealth to stake."

*Draupadi
staked and lost*

Stake the peerless Draupadi; by her win back thyself." Then Yudhishtira

described the beauties and virtues of Draupadi, and staked her. There were cries of "Shame!" from the assembly. Bishma, Drona, and Kripa sweated with apprehension; Vidura hid his face in his hands, and abased himself to the earth. Only Dhritarāshtra with senile glee cackled, "Hath the stake been won? Hath the stake been won?" But Sakuni, as always, said only, "Lo! I have won," and took up the dice that had been cast.

Then Draupadi was dragged by the hair into the assembly, so that even Dhritarāshtra had pity on her, and, moreover, was seriously alarmed by the prospect of strife between the Kauravas and the Pāndavas.

*Dhritarāshtra
intervenes*

Also terrible cries of jackals and birds, omens of disaster, were heard.

So Dhritarāshtra granted to Draupadi two boons: first, the freedom of Yudhishtira, and then of his brothers, with their chariots and weapons. Dhritarāshtra would have granted her a third boon, but she said that the Pāndavas, freed from a state of bondage, would be able to regain their prosperity by their own exertions.

Dhritarāshtra, however, restored to the Pāndavas their kingdom and all their wealth, and commanded them to return to Indraprastha and to forgive the Kauravas and live at peace with them. He told them also that he had allowed

the gambling to go on from motives of policy, to try the strength and weakness of his children !

Of course the Kauravas were furious. They told Dhritarāshtra that the Pāṇḍavas were certain to want revenge, and that they would certainly invade the Kauravas' kingdom.

To prevent this they devised a new gambling contest. The stake on both sides was to be the same. ^{*Renewed gambling and second exile of the Pāṇḍavas*} Whichever lost, Kauravas or Pāṇḍavas, were to go into exile in the jungle for twelve years, and to spend another year in some inhabited country without being recognized. This they persuaded Dhritarāshtra was necessary, so that during the exile of the Pāṇḍavas the Kauravas might make themselves so strong that no one could hurt them.

The Pāṇḍavas had already departed, but messengers were sent after them, and they consented to return for this new game of dice, although they knew how they had been cheated by Sakuni. The dice were cast, and again, "Lo ! I have won," said Sakuni. So the Pāṇḍavas went into exile.

(5) THE PĀṆDAVAS RETURN FROM EXILE

I am afraid you may be getting tired of this long story, especially as so far there has not been much in it about the war. So I will pass over the first twelve years of the Pāṇḍavas' exile in the jungle, although they were full of exciting adventures.

Then came the year that they must spend in disguise in an inhabited country. They decided

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to go to the court of Virāta, the old king of the Matsyas.* Yudhishtira presented himself as a Brāhman skilled in dice and chess, who could amuse the king with these games. Bhima became a cook, who was willing, if asked, to be a wrestler also.

*Pāndavas
in disguise
at the court of
King Virāta*

Arjuna covered his arms with bangles to hide the marks left on them by the bowstring, put ear-rings in his ears, and let a braid of hair hang down his back, and presented himself to the king as having attended upon Draupadi in King Yudhishtira's palace. He lived in the women's apartments, teaching singing and dancing to the young princesses and other ladies of the court. Nakula became head groom, and Sāhādeva head cowherd. Draupadi served the queen as a waiting-maid skilled in dressing hair.

Before they went to the palace of Virāta the Pāndavas hid their bows, quivers full of arrows, and swords among the branches of a great rose-wood tree that grew in the midst of a grove full of wild beasts and snakes near a dreary burial-ground. Moreover, so that people might avoid the tree, they also hung up a corpse on it, telling some shepherds who questioned them that it was the body of their mother, aged one hundred and eighty years, and that they had hung it there because such was their custom.

Duryodhana sent spies everywhere searching for the Pāndavas, but they returned without any news of them. It happened, however, that Susarman,

* The Matsyas' country was directly west of Pāñchāla, extending as far as the Great Indian Desert.

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King of the Trigartas, made war on the Matsyas, and took captive King Virāta. He was rescued by Yudhishthira and Bhima, who in turn made Susarman captive. When Duryodhana heard of this war between Susarman and Virāta he determined to take the opportunity of carrying off Virāta's cattle. The Kauravas, therefore, coming with a great army, seized great numbers of cattle while Virāta was fighting Susarman. Now, in the absence of Virāta, his son, Uttara, had to try and recover the cattle, but he had no charioteer that he could trust.

Arjuna heard of this, and caused Uttara to be told that the princesses' teacher of dancing and singing was formerly the charioteer of Arjuna, and had driven his horses in many of his great battles. At Uttara's request his youngest sister, a beautiful maiden, begged Arjuna to be Uttara's charioteer, and he consented. First he caused much laughter by pretending not to know how to put on a coat of mail, and at last ascended the chariot with his braid of hair hanging down his back and his arms covered with bangles.

Uttara ordered him to drive towards the Kuru army, which was drawn up not far from the rose-wood tree with the hidden weapons. But when Uttara saw the Kauravas' mighty force he was afraid, and leapt from the car, throwing away his bow and arrows, and running for his life. Arjuna, with his braid of hair flying behind, and his red, womanish garments fluttering, pursued Uttara, and catching him in a hundred paces, dragged him back by the hair to the chariot, made him act as



THE FIGHT BETWEEN BISHMA AND ARJUNA.



ARJUNA AND YUDHISHTHIRA EMBRACE

charioteer, and drive first to the rosewood tree. This was not the end of Uttara's shame. He had to climb the corpse-infested tree and bring down the arms of the Pāndavas. But when the beauty of these and what Arjuna told him proved to him whose charioteer he had now become, he was reconciled to his fate, and drove Arjuna boldly against the Kuru army.

Then Bishma and Drona saw that the strange creature with the braided hair and womanish garments was really Arjuna, and great fear-fell on the Kauravas. This was The Kauravas recognize the Pāndavas all the greater when Arjuna hoisted his banner and sounded twice his terrible conch.

It may seem strange that so many heroes, Bishma, Drona, Karna, Kripa, and Duryodhana, should have doubted their power to overcome Arjuna, who was single-handed; but the poet tells us that Arjuna had more than mortal powers. Karna boasted that he was Arjuna's equal, but was rebuked by Kripa for his boasting. Drona was for peace, and was accused of always favouring the Pāndavas. Bishma made a speech in favour of union. He said, "Of all the calamities of an army that have been spoken of by wise men, the worst is disunion among the leaders." This produced harmony, and Bishma then made a plan of battle. Duryodhana was to go north towards Hastināpura with one quarter of the army, and let another quarter guard the king. The remaining half of the army would withstand Arjuna, or the King of the Matsyas, or even Indra himself. This plan was approved. Arjuna's

great desire was to fight Duryodhana, and he directed Uttara to drive the chariot in his direction. "At the blare of his conch," *The recovery of the cattle* we read, "and the rattle of his car-wheels, and the twang of his bow Gāndiva, and the roar of the superhuman creatures stationed on his flagstaff, the earth began to tremble; and shaking their upraised tails and lowing together, the kine turned back, proceeding along the southern road."

The Kauravas hoped to defeat Arjuna by a flank attack as he tried to follow Duryodhana.

Arjuna over-comes one by one the Kaurava heroes

But he shot such clouds of arrows as darkened the sun, and drove in turn Karna, Kripa, Drona, and Bishma off the field. Then Duryodhana came against Arjuna, and wounded him with an arrow, so that the warm life-blood gushed profusely from the wound, "showing beautifully like a wreath of golden flowers." Duryodhana fought upon an elephant, and Arjuna slew it with a single arrow, and also wounded Duryodhana, who fled. Arjuna taunted him, saying that his name Duryodhana was meaningless: "When thou runnest away, where is thy persistence in battle?" Then Duryodhana turned back into the battle, supported by Bishma, Drona, Kripa, and others. Arjuna again

Kauravas swoon at sound of Arjuna's conch

filled the air with his arrows, and again sounded his conch. And at the sound all the Kaurava warriors except Bishma swooned away. Arjuna sent Uttara to secure their garments as trophies, and on Uttara's return extricated himself from

the press of battle. Bishma then attacked him again, and he slew Bishma's chariot horses and pierced the high-souled hero with ten arrows.

And so ended the battle, and Arjuna returned to the capital of the Matsyas with the recovered cattle. The garments he had taken from the Kaurava heroes he gave to the princesses for dressing their dolls.

(6) PEACE OR WAR ?

King Virāta was very grateful to the Pāndavas for having recovered his cattle, and wished to make the friendship between him and them as firm as possible. So it was arranged that his daughter should marry Arjuna's son. The wedding was a splendid one, and all the kings who were friendly to the Pāndavas attended it. The day after the wedding a great council was held to discuss the state of things between the Kauravas and the Pāndavas. The divine Krishna opened the discussion. He pointed out how the Pāndavas had honourably carried out the terms of their wager, and had passed twelve years in exile and the additional year in concealment. The conduct of the Kauravas, and particularly of Duryodhana, had been by no means equally honourable. In fact, the Kauravas had done all in their power, both by violence and by fraud, to destroy the Pāndavas. The Pāndavas, doubtless, were strong enough to defeat the Kauravas in battle; but it would be much better if the Kauravas would be reasonable and restore their half of the kingdom

*Discussion of
war or peace*

*Krishna's
speech for
peace*

to the Pāṇḍavas. Krishna therefore proposed that an ambassador should be sent to the Kauravas to arrange this. Perhaps this would have been agreed

*His brother
blames
Yudhishtira*

to if Krishna's elder brother had not spoken next. He dwelt on the folly of Yudhishtira. When there were thousands of dice players to gamble with, Yudhishtira must needs choose Sakuni. It was no blame to this expert gambler that he defeated the inexperienced Yudhishtira. The ambassador must, therefore, approach all the Kaurava leaders with the greatest respect and humility, in the hope of inducing them to forgive Yudhishtira's folly, and give up the half of the kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas.

Then arose in wrath the bold King Sātyaki. "Why," he said, "is any one permitted to speak in this assembly a word of blame of the virtuous Yudhishtira, who, it is well known, was shamefully cheated by the Kauravas, but nevertheless honourably kept his agreement with them? It is no use trying to make any agreement with the Kauravas. Better far an open fight, in which we shall slay Duryodhana and Sakuni and Karna in battle, and give the Pāṇḍavas rule over the undivided Kuru race."

*Drupada's
advice*

Then Drupada, King of the Pāṇchālas, advised that all the kings friendly to the Pāṇḍavas should be invited to send troops to support them, and that when great armies had in this way been collected, a messenger should be sent demanding their kingdom for the Pāṇḍavas. Only a show of force, he thought, would have any influence on Duryodhana. This was

approved by Krishna, and it having been agreed that King Drupada should send a messenger to Hastināpura, the assembled kings returned to their homes.

Then Yudhishthira, Drupada, and Virāta began to make preparations for war, and Dhritarāshtra, hearing that the Pāndavas had collected a large army, summoned his allies also, so that the land was full of troops. Drupada, as arranged, sent as ambassador to Dhritarāshtra his own priest.

*Exchange of
messengers,
and prepara-
tions for war*

The result of this was that Dhritarāshtra in his turn sent Sanjaya as a messenger to the Pāndavas. Sanjaya was instructed to say that Dhritarāshtra desired peace, and that there was nothing he would not do at the bidding of Krishna. Now, Krishna was on the side of the Pāndavas; and while he advised both parties to be at peace with one another, he made it clear that he thought the Pāndavas had been ill-used. Yudhishthira's reply to the Kauravas was, "Either give me back my own Indraprastha or fight with me."

It was then decided, as a last chance of peace, that Krishna himself should visit the court of King Dhritarāshtra. But Duryodhana hardened his heart, and determined that no good should come of this embassy.

*Krishna
goes to
Hastināpura*

The Mahābhārata makes nothing more plain than the wicked folly of Duryodhana. Vidura said of him, "he hath abandoned all virtue, and is in love with sin." He believed only in force, and cared nothing for the justice of the Pāndava cause. He trusted in the skill and bravery of Bishma, Drona, Kripa, and Karna to overcome the Pān-

davas, although all these heroes had been beaten from the field by Arjuna unaided. The poor old blind king, his father, Dhritarāshtra, could not influence him. Bishma and Drona begged him not to begin this terrible war, which would ruin the Bhāratas and depopulate the world. Dhritarāshtra made a moving appeal for union among the brothers. Duryodhana, full of anger and pride, scorned all these appeals. He argued that the Pāndavas, having of their own free-will gambled away their wealth, their kingdom, and their liberty, had no claim on him. Never, he said, would he consent to the restoration to them of their share of the kingdom. After this there was no hope of averting the war, and both sides got ready.

One more thing Krishna tried to do for the Pāndavas. On his way back from Dhritarāshtra's court he took up into his chariot Karna, *Krishna tries to win over Karna* and revealed to him that his father was not, as was commonly supposed, a simple chariot-driver, but the Sun-God himself, Surya, and that his mother was Kunti, the mother of the Pāndavas. "You are, then," said Krishna, "the brother of the Pāndavas, and it is your duty to take sides with them." But Karna said that he had been abandoned by his own mother, but cherished by the charioteer's wife, and favoured by Duryodhana, and he could not desert the Kauravas. Moreover, for Yudhishtira's good he could not change sides. He was the eldest son of Kunti, and if this were known to Yudhishtira he would never consent to be king when, in justice, the kingship belonged to Karna. So Karna remained with the Pāndavas.

Now, both the Pāṇdavas and the Kauravas greatly desired the support and help of Krishna; and learning that the King of the Yādavas was to be at a certain town *Arjuna chooses Krishna* on a certain night, Arjuna and Duryodhana both went there. When they arrived Krishna still slept, for it was still night. Duryodhana was the first to enter his room, and seated himself at the head of the bed, and Arjuna came in after and stood at the bedside. It happened, therefore, that when Krishna awoke he first saw Arjuna. Duryodhana immediately began to beg Krishna's help, saying that he had been the first to come. This Krishna allowed, but, said he, "the son of Kunti, O king, has been first beheld by me. While, therefore, I shall give my help to both, it will be for him to choose what that help shall be. I have a great army of many thousands of men; these shall be sent to one of you, and I alone will go to the other. But I shall go not as a warrior, for I am resolved not to fight. O son of Kunti, choose you between my army and me." Arjuna did not hesitate a moment; he chose Krishna himself. Duryodhana, therefore, was to have the army, and foolishly imagined he had the best of the bargain. In the war Krishna acted as Arjuna's charioteer.

Many peoples and kings are mentioned as taking part in the war which followed. *The peoples concerned in the war* I do not think you will want to know all their names. Some of them have been mentioned already. The Pāṇdavas, of course, had for allies the Matsyas and the Pāṇ-

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chālas. They were also helped by the Kings of Magadha, Kāsi, and Kosala, kingdoms of which I shall have to say more hereafter. Among the Kurus' allies were the King of Mādra, and even the Andhras, another people I shall have to say more about, in the south-east, between the Kistna and Godavari Rivers. All the peoples of Northern India were concerned in the war, and, speaking very generally, all were on the Kaurava side, except the peoples on the middle waters of the Ganges and Jumna.

The epic is concerned more with the deeds of heroes than of their peoples, and all I can do is to try and give you a general idea of the fighting, and relate very shortly the great exploits of the Pāndavas and the fate of some of their chief enemies.

(7) THE WAR

The hero of the first part of the wars was Bishma. He was commander-in-chief of the Kauravas' forces, and he was equally revered by both parties. On the first morning of the battle the Pāndavas were amazed to see Yudhishtira put off his coat of mail, lay down his weapons, and advance towards the Kaurava army. Krishna and the other Pāndavas asked what this meant, but Yudhishtira gave them no reply. The Kauravas rejoiced, thinking that he came to join them; but Yudhishtira passed through their ranks to Bishma, and casting himself at the high-souled hero's feet, said, "I salute thee, O invincible one! With thee we will

*Yudhishtira
seeks Bishma's
permission to
fight*

He leapt from Arjuna's car whirling his shining discus, and advanced upon Bishma, who for his part welcomed death at Krishna's hand. But Arjuna in the nick of time, embracing Krishna's knees, besought him to curb his anger, and promised him to annihilate the Kauravas. Krishna, well pleased, returned to the chariot.

And so the battle went on from day to day, and Bishma remained the great Kaurava hero. His position was a strange one. He knew that the Pāndava cause was just, but he felt bound to fight for his near relations, the Kauravas. Moreover, he could not escape by a chance death on the battle-field. He was a hero, the son of the goddess Gangā, and could not be defeated even by the gods with Indra at their head.

In the hope of getting out of this difficulty, the Pāndavas and Krishna put off their coats of mail and visited Bishma in his tent. The Kuru grandsire received them kindly, and told them how he might be conquered. *Bishma tells how he may be slain* "One that hath thrown away his weapons," said he, "one that hath fallen down, one who is flying away, one who is a female, one who beareth the name of a female—with these I cannot and will not fight. Sikhandin was brought up as a woman, and hath borne a woman's name. Him will I never strike. Do thou, Arjuna, therefore place Sikhandin before thee, and with him as a shelter from my attack pierce me on every side with thy arrows."

Arjuna could not bear to be the slayer of

Bishma. He recalled how in childhood, when, covered with dust from his games, he used to climb on Bishma's knees and smear his body with the dust; and how once, when he called Bishma father, he was answered, "I am not thy father, but thy father's father, O Bhārata!" At length Krishna persuaded him that it was his duty to slay even his grandsire if being true to his word required it.

At length, therefore, on the tenth day of the battle, after Bishma had brought great slaughter to the Pāṇdavas, Arjuna placed Sikhandin before him, and went to the attack. Bishma would not shoot at Sikhandin, who, however, pierced Bishma with his arrows. Arjuna also wounded Bishma many times, and at last, when "there was not in his body a space of two fingers' breadth that was not pierced by arrows," he fell. Even then the multitude of arrows prevented his body reaching the ground, and he lay on what the poet calls his bed of arrows for many days, until he died.

*Bishma's bed
of arrows*

This did not end the war. Drona was made commander-in-chief of the Kaurava armies, and his heroism again brought victory to the Kauravas. At length he was slain by a stratagem. Aswatthāman, Drona's younger son, was as heroic as his father, and doing great execution among the Pāṇdava hosts. Now, it so happened that in the Pāṇdava army there was an elephant named Aswatthāman. Him Bhima slew, and as soon as he got near to Drona,

*Drona falls
through a
stratagem*



BISHMA ON THE BED OF ARROWS.

shouted, "Aswatthāman is slain." Drona did not at first believe him; but when Yudhishthira, in whose truth Drona firmly believed, assured him that Aswatthāman was in truth dead, Drona despaired, and yielded his life to his enemies.

Now, of all the great Kaurava heroes there remained only Karna. He was now made commander-in-chief, and fought bravely for two days. Then he met Arjuna, and, because the wheel of his chariot sunk in the soft earth, was obliged to fight on foot.

*Karna
overcome by
Arjuna*

This is how Romesh Dutt describes the final scene :—

" Vainly, too, the gallant Karna leaped upon the humid soil,
Sought to lift the sunken axle with a hard, unwonted toil.
' Hold ! ' he cried to noble Arjun, ' wage no fierce and
impious war
On a foeman, helpless, careless—thou upon thy lofty car.'
Loudly laughed the helmèd Arjun, answer nor rejoinder gave;
Unto Karna pleading virtue Krishna answered calm and
grave :
' Didst thou seek the path of virtue, mighty Karna, archer
bold,
When Sakuni robbed Yudishthir of his empire and his
gold ?
Didst thou tread the path of honour on Yudishthir's fatal
fall,
Heaping insults on Draupadi in Hastina's council hall ?
Didst thou then fulfil thy duty when, Yudishthir's exile
cross,
Krishna asked in right and justice for Yudishthir's empire
lost ?
Speak not, then, of rules of honour, blackened in your sins
you die ;
Death is come in shape of Arjun, Karna's fatal hour is nigh ! '
Stung to fury and to madness, faint but frantic, Karna
fought,
Reckless, ruthless, and relentless, valiant Arjun's life he
sought,
Sent his last resistless arrow on his foeman's mighty chest ;
Arjun felt a shock of thunder on his broad and mailèd breast !
Fainting fell the bleeding Arjun, darkness dimmed his manly
eye ;
Pale and breathless watched his warriors, anxious watched
the gods in sky !
Then it passed, and helmèd Arjun rose like newly lighted fire,
And he drew the bow Gandiva, aimed his dart with stilled
breath ;
Like the fiery bolt of lightning Arjun's lurid arrow sped,
Like the red and flaming meteor Karna fell among the dead."

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After the death of Karna the rest of the Kaurava heroes were slain, Kripa by Yudhishtira, Duryodhana and his brothers by Bhīma.

End of the war Romesh Dutt thinks that the leading thought of the epic is the rivalry between Arjuna and Karna. The death of Karna is, then, the climax of the story, and I need not pursue it further; though not the least beautiful part of the poem describes the retirement from the world and the deaths of Dhritharāshtra and Kunti and the Pāndavas and Draupadi.

Much has been written about the historical interest of the Mahābhārata. One thing only I will mention here, and that is, how little change so many centuries seem to have made in the ways of behaving of statesmen and warriors. Then, as of late, kings suffered from "earth hunger; they had become like dogs that snatch meat from one another." From this come the many acts of wickedness and folly of Duryodhana. But we find that he is constantly opposed by those who believe in justice rather than in force. The poor old blind Dhritharāshtra, Bishma, and Drona are on this side, and, wisest of them all, the sage Vidura. Moreover, the very arguments that are put forward are exactly those used to-day. If we can't help seeing in Duryodhana a likeness to the late Kaiser, Vidura would have made a splendid president of the League of Nations.

V. BUDDHA

IN the Vedic Age the Aryans had not advanced much beyond the Punjab; in the Heroic Age, described in the Mahābhārata, the capitals of the Kauravas and Pāndavas were neither of them far from the modern Delhi. By the time of Buddha, which was, perhaps, five hundred years after the Heroic Age, the scene of the great events of Indian history has moved still farther east, to the country between the Himalayas and Vindhya Mountains, watered by the Ganges, Jumna, and Son. Here there were, first, to the east of Pāncālā, the kingdom of Kosala, with its capital, Ayodhya, extending pretty much over the modern kingdom of Oudh. Then again to the east were a number of smaller states, which it is very interesting to know were republics rather than kingdoms. It is true that these republics had rajahs, but the government was carried on by a public assembly that used to meet in a mantapam built for the purpose, and decide upon peace or war, and act as a court of justice. Of these republics the best known was that of the Sākiyas, which lay east of Kosala from what is now the frontier of Nepal to the Ganges. Its capital was Kāpilavastu, and for hundreds of years no one knew where it had stood. Along the foot

Indian kingdoms in Buddha's time

The Sākiyas

of the Himalayas lies the Tarai, separating the mountains from the cultivated plains. The Tarai is covered with dense jungle full of elephants and tigers, and there men suffer greatly from fever. Only thirty years ago travellers discovered in it a lonely stone pillar with an inscription on it. Later was found north of Gorukpore a dead city almost buried in a jungle of tree ferns and creepers. Moreover, among the ruins another pillar with an inscription was found, proving that this dead and forgotten city was really Kāpilavastu.

To the east again of the republics was the kingdom of Magadha, extending roughly over the modern district of Patna and the northern half of the district of Gayā. Not a very large kingdom, you see, in Buddha's time, but destined to become the greatest in India.

Now all these places are important in the life of Buddha. He was born at Kāpilavastu. Buddh Gayā, the scene of his meditations under the Bo-tree, is in Magadha, and he spent much of his life in Kāsi, which then was part of Kosala.

Buddha was born about two thousand four hundred years ago (483 B.C.), and was given the name of Siddhārtha. His father was Suddhodana, Rajah of the Sākiyas; his mother, Māha Māyā Devi: but as she died seven days after his birth he was brought up by an aunt, who became one of his most faithful disciples. At the age of eight the sage Visvamitra was appointed his tutor, to teach him all that a prince should know. When an auspicious day had arrived the prince was to

Magadha

*Buddha's
birth*

His education

begin his education. "Write this verse," said Visvamitra, and slowly recited the verse "Gāyatri." "Ācharya, I write," replied the prince, and wrote it in all known alphabets and languages. "Now," said Visvamitra, "to numbers. Repeat your numeration, by units up to ten, then by tens to hundreds, and so by thousands to a lakh." Siddhārtha did so; but, a poet tells us, went far beyond the lakh, giving numbers to count the grains of dust, the stars of night, the drops of water in the ocean, and "all the drops that in ten thousand years would fall on all the worlds by daily rain." Then said Visvamitra, "Most noble prince, since thou knowest these, need I teach thee measures of length?" Then Buddha named the most minute measures; for instance, how many motes in the sunbeam equal the breadth of the point of a mouse's whisker; how many of these go to a barley-corn which is itself seven times the waist of a wasp. From these he went on to a bow's length, a lance's length, and a mile, and even truly computed the number of motes in a mile!

A pretty story is told to show the gentleness and compassion of the young prince. One day his cousin Devadatta shot at a flock of wild swans passing overhead and wounded one in the wing. The bird fell to the ground. Siddhārtha took it up and bound up its wound. Devadatta claimed the bird as his own, but Siddhārtha said, "Not so; the bird belongs not to him who attempted to take its life, but to him who has saved it."

*Buddha's
compassion*

At length the time came when the young prince

should be married. His father sent his pundit to inquire in all the Kshatriya families of the Sākiyas for a maiden worthy to be his son's bride. At last one was found, but her father was unwilling for the marriage to take place. He had heard that the prince loved more to wander in the forest and sit in meditation than to join his fellows in manly exercises and sports. Consequently Suddhodana arranged that a contest in all the arts suitable for Kshatriyas should be held among five hundred of the noblest youth of the Sākiyas. In this contest the prince excelled all the rest with the sword and the bow, in swimming and riding, in the management of elephants, and in music. Moreover, he showed the greatest skill in writing, arithmetic, and grammar, and a perfect knowledge of the Vedas, logic, and philosophy. Among the defeated were his two cousins, Ananda, who became his most faithful disciple, and Devadatta, who from this time was his bitter enemy.

And so Siddhārtha married; but this did not put an end to his meditations. He felt that he had been sent into the world for a special purpose, to show mankind a way to be delivered from the bondage of their sins. Suddhodana feared lest these thoughts should make his son turn yogi, and, to divert him from them, provided for him every luxury. He had built for the prince three palaces for spring, summer, and winter, and filled them with silken curtains, embroidered carpets, and vessels of gold and silver. In these were a multitude of servants and slaves, who had not only to do the young

prince's pleasure, but guard him carefully from any contact with the outside world.

All these precautions were in vain. One day on his way from the city to the garden in which he had been born, he saw by the roadside a broken, decrepit old man sup-

He meets an old man

porting his frail body with a stick, almost speechless with age and feebleness. "Who is that man?" asked Siddhārtha of his charioteer. "He is small and weak, his muscles are wasted, his hair is white, his teeth chatter, he can hardly walk. Is it because he belongs to some particular family, or do all men in time become like him?" "My lord," answered the charioteer, "it is nothing to do with his family. All men become old like him; there is no escape for any human being from old age." "I see," said the prince; "that man is indeed ignorant and weak. In youth he is proud and careless, and does not see the old age that awaits him. Turn my chariot; what have I, who must in time become old, to do with pleasure?"

Another day Siddhārtha saw by the roadside a sick man, burning with fever, without friends or shelter, hardly able to breathe, and

The sick man

with nothing to hope for but death. Again he questioned his charioteer, and having received the answer he expected: "Health, then," said he, "lasts no longer than a dream, from which man awakes to this horrible suffering. What wise man, having seen a sight like this, can think of joy and pleasure?" And he returned immediately to his palace.

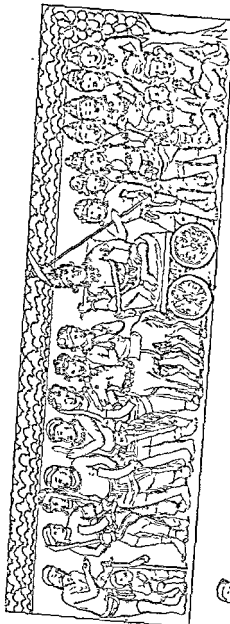
Another day he saw a corpse placed on a bier



ARJUNA AND YUDHISHTHIRA EMBRACE.

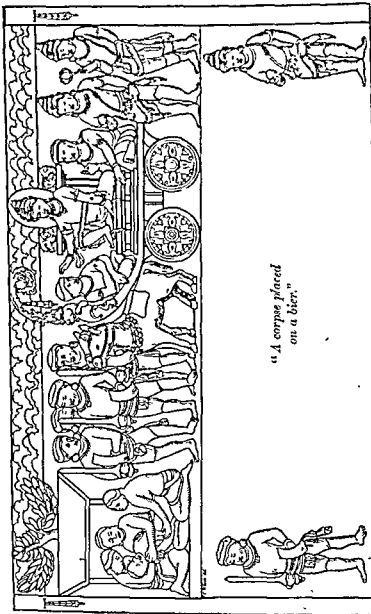
*“He saw by the roadside
a broken, decrepit
old man.”*





*"He saw by the roadside
a broken, decrepit
old man."*





*"A corpse placed
on a bier."*

and covered with a cloth. A crowd of relations surrounded it, weeping and tearing their hair, throwing dust on their heads, and beating their breasts. "Ah, misery,"

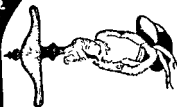
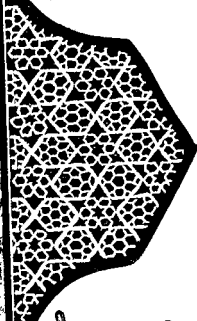
said the prince, "that old age must destroy, that so many maladies are the foes of health, that life is so short. Would that there were no old age, no sickness, no death!" And for the first time letting something of his thoughts be known, he added, "Let us return to the palace; I must think how mankind is to be delivered."

One more meeting was necessary to convince Siddhārtha of what he must do. He saw by the roadside a yogi, calm, dignified, with downcast eyes, in a ragged cloak, and carrying an alms bowl. "Who is this man?" asked the prince. "My lord," said the charioteer, "this man is one of those called yogis, who leads a life of great austerity. Without passion, without jealousy or hatred, he lives in holy meditation on the alms of the pious."

All these things were told to Suddhodana, who had Siddhārtha more carefully watched than ever.

Buddha asks leave of his father to depart The young prince spoke with his father, asking his leave to depart. The king begged him to change his mind, asking him what he really wanted.

"My lord," said Siddhārtha, "I wish for four things; if you can give me them I will remain with you. They are: That I may never grow old; that I may be always in perfect health; and that I may not be subject to death. "Even the Rishis," said the king, "cannot do this." "Grant me this, then,"



"HE CUT OFF HIS HAIR WITH HIS SWORD" (see page 78).

said the prince, "that when my earthly life is over I may not be subject to the risks and chances of transmigration."

The king then saw that his son was bent on a religious life, and determined to prevent by force his departure. Every door of the palace was watched, and the gates of the town, and a special band of five hundred young Sākiyas was formed to prevent the escape of the prince.

*The palace
watched*

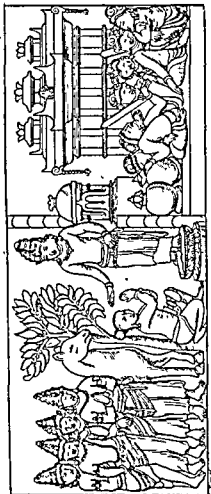
All these efforts were vain. One night, when all the guards, worn out with watching, were sunk in slumber, the prince ordered his charioteer to saddle his horse Kantaka, and escaped at midnight from the town. He rode all night, and when dawn came he dismounted, gave to his charioteer his turban adorned with pearls, and sent him away with Kantaka. Then he cut off his hair with his sword, for a man devoted to religion could not wear his hair like a Kshatriya. Next he exchanged his clothes of Benares muslin for the worn clothes of yellow deerskin of a hunter he happened to meet.

Buddha's flight

Siddhārtha's flight was soon discovered, and men were sent to find him. They soon came across the hunter in the prince's clothes, and would have overtaken the prince, but the charioteer persuaded them to return to the king. "The prince," he said, "is quite fixed in his intention. He has determined not to return to Kāpilavastu before he has attained the supreme knowledge, and has become the perfect and accomplished Buddha." The king and Siddhārtha's young wife were plunged in grief;

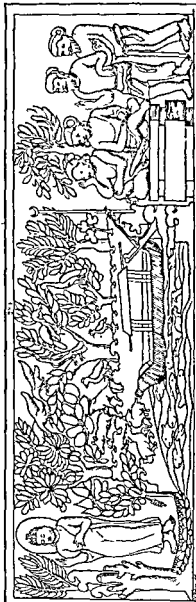


*"The prince ordered his charioteer
to saddle his horse
Kantaka."*





*“He sought a quiet
retreat on the
river bank.”*



but they dared not make any further attempt to recover their son and husband.

Siddhārtha made his way to Rājagriha, the old capital of Magadha. The people had heard of his wisdom and beauty, and when he appeared in the streets with his alms bowl the bazaars were emptied

*Buddha and
Bimbisara*

of their buyers and sellers, and every one crowded round the princely mendicant. Bimbisara, the King of Magadha, who was the same age as Siddhārtha, saw the popular excitement from his palace windows, came the next day to visit him, and begged him to take up his abode in the palace. Siddhārtha declined, and after a short stay in the capital, sought a quiet retreat on the river bank.

Siddhārtha at first thought that the way of salvation lay through the austerities of a yogi, and for six years he practised these in all their rigour, sacrificing his strength

His austerities

and beauty. But he became convinced that he was not on the right path. He gave up his austerities, ate heartily, and recovered his strength and beauty. He did not cease, however, from meditation, and at length he felt himself in possession of the truth, and that he was indeed the Buddha. One day

*He finds the
truth*

he met on the road a seller of grass, who was cutting a kind of soft, sweet-smelling grass fit for mat-making. Siddhārtha went to this man and asked him for some of his grass. Of this he made a carpet, with the points of the grass in the middle, the roots at the edges. On this he seated himself at the foot of a tree, his legs crossed, his body

erect and turned to the east. The tree was the famous Bo-tree. He remained seated thus without movement for a day and a night, and at dawn he became the perfect Buddha, attained perfect intelligence and triple knowledge.

"Yes," said he, "thus shall I put an end to the misery of the world." And, striking the earth with his hand, "Let this earth be my witness. It is the home of all living creatures; it encloses everything movable and immovable; it is impartial; it shall witness that I do not lie."

Buddha then began to consider how "the law"—that is, his new religion—could be communicated to mankind, and so difficult was this task that he almost gave it up in despair. He reflected, however, that mankind might be divided into three parts. One-third believes in what is untrue, and will continue to do so; one-third believes in the truth; and one-third is in a state of uncertainty as to what is true and what is false. The three parts are like the lotuses in a tank. Some have not yet emerged from the water, some have just reached the surface, others have risen above it. If he did not teach "the law," therefore, at least one-third of the human race would never know it.

When Buddha was practising austerities he had five disciples, who when he gave up his austerities had left him. These, he decided, should be the first to receive "the law." He accordingly journeyed to Benares, where they were in what is commonly called the Deer Park. The five saw the Buddha

*He considers
how to give
"the law"
to mankind*

*He begins
with his five
disciples*



*"Then Buddha
explained to them
his doctrine."*



afar off, and arranged among themselves that they would not rise to receive him, nor allow him a seat on their carpet. But as he came nearer, they were, in spite of themselves, overcome by his majesty and glory. They rose to welcome him, and begged him to seat himself upon the carpet. Then Buddha explained to them his doctrine, and they became his disciples. King Bimbisara, who had always been his friend, also was converted. He presented Buddha with the Bamboo Grove, where huts could be built for his disciples. Bimbisara's wife was a princess

Ajātasatru of Kosala, and their son was named Ajātasatru. When Bimbisara had reigned fifty-two years he was murdered by Ajātasatru. This prince at first showed little favour to Buddha; in fact, he was a close friend of Devadatta, Buddha's cousin and enemy. It was Devadatta, in fact, who had beguiled Ajātasatru to kill his righteous father. Notwithstanding this murder Ajātasatru was one of the eight persons with a right to a share in the relics of Buddha, so that it seems he was afterwards converted, and I hope he then repented.

During his life as a preacher of "the law" Buddha lived less in Magadha than in Kosala, at its capital, Srāvastī, which seems to have been near the modern Fyzabad. *Buddha's life as preacher* Here he spent much time in a beautiful garden given to him by the Diwan of Kosala. The family of Buddha, his father, his aunt, his cousin Ananda, and his wives, all became his disciples; and, in fact, all the Sākiyas became Buddhists.

Although, of course, the new religion was opposed by the Brāhmans, it continued to spread, and, before Buddha died at the age of eighty, must have had many thousands of believers. *Buddha's death*

Whatever we may think about Buddhism as a religion, it is clear that Buddha was one of the greatest men that India has produced. *Buddhism*
The religion he founded, although in time it almost disappeared in India, spread over Eastern Asia after his death, and is still the religion of many millions in Tibet, Nepal, China, Japan, Siam, Burma, and Ceylon.



Buddha's divinely-aided escape.

VI. INDIA AND THE YAVANAS

(1) ALEXANDER THE GREAT

IN my first chapter I told you that I should not give you many dates of years, but generally speak about

*Alexander
conquers the
Persian
Empire*

centuries. Now I come to an event the exact date of which is known.

This is the first coming to India of people from Europe. These people

were called by the Indians Yavanas. In Europe they were known as Macedonians. Their king was the celebrated Alexander the Great. He was King of Macedonia, and his kingdom was the southern part of what we now call the Balkan Peninsula. The most southerly part of it, Greece, had belonged to a number of republics, but these



COIN OF ALEXANDER.

had quarrelled among themselves, and had been conquered by the Macedonian King Philip. This was Alexander's father. Between Macedonia and India was the great Empire of Persia, extending west to east from Asia Minor to Afghanistan. The Persians had tried to overcome the

Greeks, and had failed. Philip was intending to

renew the war against Persia when he died. Alexander, therefore, led his armies against Persia. For seven years he marched and fought, going ever eastward, and having conquered the whole Persian Empire, in the year 329 B.C., about a century and a half after the death of Buddha, he was in Southern Afghanistan.

This was perhaps the most wonderful thing that had happened so far in the history of the world. Think what Alexander had done. If you look at your atlas you will find that the 25th degree of longitude passes through Macedonia, and that Kandahar is east of the 65th degree. If Alexander had marched in a straight line he must have gone at least 2,764 miles. Of course his marches were altogether far longer. He went first, for instance, to Egypt, and he had to go to and fro in the Persian Empire wherever he heard that there were armies to fight against. Then, too, think of the kind of country he had to march and fight in, full of waste places, rushing rivers, and high mountains. You may suppose that by the time he reached Afghanistan his men were quite used to hardships. Not only this, but they had come to think of him as little less than a god, whom no one could possibly defeat.

*Greatness of
Alexander's
exploits*

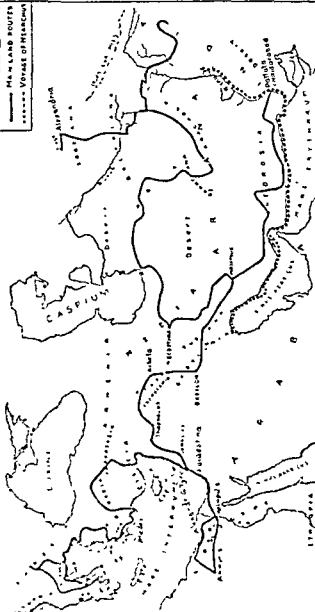
People in India must have heard something of all this, and when Alexander came into Afghanistan the kings of the Punjab must have wondered what next he intended. What he actually did was to build a city and name it Alexandria. He built several

*Alexandria-
among the-
Arachosians*

ALEXANDER'S MARCHES

— Main Land Routes

--- Voyage of Nearchus



cities to which he gave this name. The best known is Alexandria in Egypt, which has never lost its importance. The Alexandria in Afghanistan is now called Kandahar.

The Punjabis must have felt that the building of this city meant that they were to have Alexander and his Yavanas as permanent neighbours. There was no easy way, however, from Southern Afghanistan *Alexander in the Kabul valley* into the Punjab, and perhaps they trusted to this for security. If so, they could not do so for long. Although it was winter, and high hills had to be crossed, Alexander led his army to the Kabul valley. Now indeed the Punjabis must have felt that Alexander was at their door. This happened in the winter of 329-328 B.C.

For another year, however, the Punjab was undisturbed. Alexander built yet another Alexandria, this time at the foot of the Hindu Kush, and from it crossed the mountains to attack the last of the Persians to resist him. Having defeated these, he returned southwards in the spring of 327 B.C.

At this time there were in the Punjab several kingdoms. Of these, the farthest to the north-west was between the Indus and the Jhelum. The capital of its rajah was *Kingdoms of the Punjab* Takshasilā, about ten miles from where Rawal Pindi now stands. It was therefore on one of the highways into India. People coming down the Kabul valley to Peshawar and crossing the Indus would come to it on their way into the Punjab. Next to the kingdom of Takshasilā was



ALEXANDER ON HIS FAMOUS CHARGER
BUCEPHALUS.

the country of the Pūrus, a people mentioned in the Vedas. Their ruling family was that of the Pauravas, and the Paurava of Alexander's time was a very remarkable man. He was very tall and strong, and a great warrior—a hero, like those of the Great War. Moreover, he too had the earth hunger of kings, and wanted to build up for himself a great kingdom. It is not surprising if the Rajah of Takshasilā was afraid of him. At any rate there was no friendship between the two, and when it seemed clear that Alexander meant to invade the Punjab the Rajah of Takshasilā seems not to have thought of uniting with the

Paurava to resist the Yavanas. Indeed, the rajah's son, Ambhi, formed a totally different plan. He had sent messengers to Alexander while he was still at Samarkand, saying that he would fight by Alexander's side against any Indians who might resist him. In this way he thought he would make his father safe from the Paurava monarch; and in fact, when Alexander did, in the summer of 327 B.C., march upon India, he had the Rajah of Takshasilā as his ally.

*Ambhi of
Takshasilā*

Alexander had at this time an army of not more than twenty-five or thirty thousand men. Of these, many were Macedonian footmen armed with long spears and oblong or round shields. There were also Macedonian horsemen, the Kshatriyas, so to speak. There were also slingers and bowmen, and men who threw javelins, mountaineers from the Balkans. In addition to these Macedonians there were men from various parts of Asia, such as Persian cavalry and men from Central Asia, who could shoot from their horses while riding at full speed.

*Alexander's
army*

(2) ALEXANDER INVADES INDIA

For the invasion of India Alexander divided his army into two portions. One he sent to the Indus by the shortest way, to make ready for crossing that river; the other he himself led through the hills on the north of the Kabul River. The country was very rugged, and inhabited by warlike tribes, who resisted him bravely. There

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were many rock fortresses. Some of these Alexander stormed; others surrendered. Many men were killed and large quantities of cattle captured—more than two lakhs, one historian says—and of these Alexander chose some of the best to be sent home to Macedonia. One

*Capture of
Aornus*

of the rock fortresses that Alexander captured was called by the Greeks Aornus. This was a great mass of rock seemingly on the Indus, but learned men are not agreed as to exactly what rock it was. It took the Greeks many days to capture the lower parts of the rock, and then they found that they still had to get up the highest and steepest part of it. Alexander ordered his soldiers to cut each of them one hundred stakes. These they piled up against the rock, so as to form a great mound from which arrows might reach the defenders. The piling up of this mound of stakes went on for three days, when on the fourth the Macedonians succeeded in capturing a small hill on a level with the top of the rock. Alexander ordered that the mound should be made to join this small hill with the rock. Then in the night with a few hundred men he climbed the rock, the Macedonians pulling one another up, some at one place, some at another. In this way he became master of the famous rock Aornus. He then continued his march to the Indus.

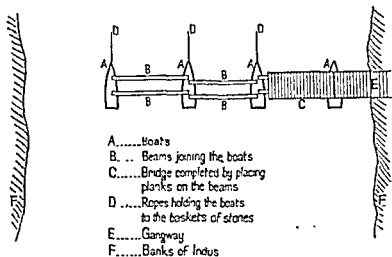
*Crossing of
the Indus*

When he got to the river he found that his generals had already made a bridge across it, and had collected many boats, both large and small. It may be supposed that the bridge was one made of boats, as

described as follows by a Greek historian: "The boats are rowed down-stream stern foremost, and are prevented from going too far by the oars. Then when each has reached its appointed place baskets of wicker work, pyramid-shaped and filled with stones, are lowered into the river from the prow of each, to hold it fast against the force of the current. As soon as one has been thus made fast another is placed parallel to it, but at a suitable distance. Beams of wood are then rapidly laid lengthwise from one boat to the other, and planks are placed crosswise on these beams. At each end of the bridge railed gangways are made so that horses and beasts of burden may with the greater safety enter upon it. The gangways serve at the same time to bind the bridge to the shore. In a short time the whole work is completed amid great noise and bustle, though discipline is by no means lost sight of as the work proceeds." Somewhat in this way, we may suppose, the Indus was bridged. (See page 94.)

When the bridge was built Alexander ordered sacrifices to the Greek gods, and athletic sports and horse races in their honour. Then the crossing began. The army was more mixed even than it had been when it entered India. It had been joined by the King of Takshasilā, now Ambhi himself, the son of the old rajah, with his Indian troops. There were also thirty elephants captured after the fall of Aornus, and multitudes of cattle.

Not long after crossing the Indus the Yavanas arrived at Takshasilā itself, the first great Indian city they had seen. They found that it was delight-



fully situated in a well-watered valley. They were astonished at its size and magnificence. It was one of the most celebrated cities in India, and a place to which young men were sent for their education. It might, in fact, be called a university town. Here Alexander held a durbar, and received the rajahs and princes who had submitted to him, and who came to bring him presents. He gave to these rulers lands taken from those who had not submitted to him. His Macedonian captains did not altogether like his generosity to the Indians, and began to grumble. Alexander took no notice of this, but pushed on with his army to the *Takshasila* *reached* *Jhelum*, on the farther bank of which the Paurava was awaiting him. This king is so generally known as Porus, which is what the Greeks called him, that it will be convenient to call him so henceforth.

(3) PORUS AND ALEXANDER

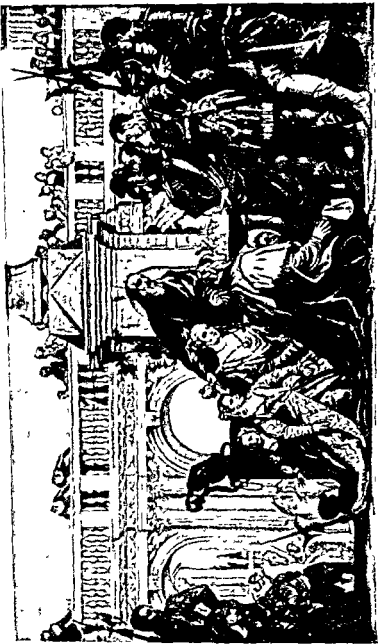
Porus must have felt that he was left almost alone to resist the Yavanas. Amblii had quite gone over to their side, along with many other rulers. Another ruler of the Paurava family, whose country lay to the east beyond the Chenūb, had offered to join Alexander. There was one man, however, that Porus thought he could trust, the Rajah of Abishara, in Kashmir; but even this man was false. At the same time that he sent troops to help Porus he sent his brother to Alexander bearing presents and promises of submission.

Porus deserves to be counted among the greatest of Indian heroes. Alexander considered himself already Emperor of India, and sent to order Porus to pay tribute and to come and meet his sovereign on the very frontiers of his own dominions. Porus answered that he would comply with the second of these demands; and when Alexander entered his kingdom he would meet him, but come armed for battle. He accordingly waited for Alexander on the left bank of the Jhelum, probably not far from where the town of Jhelum now stands.

*Heroism of
Porus*

Alexander was at Takshasilā in the hot weather of 326 B.C. It is not certain when he marched to the Jhelum—perhaps in May. Anyhow, the river was rising and the rains could not be far off, so the longer the crossing was delayed the more difficult it would be. Alexander therefore pushed on as quickly as he could. He sent part of the army in advance

*Alexander and
Porus on the
Jhelum*



THE FAMILY OF DARIUS BEFORE ALEXANDER

(From the painting by the great Italian artist, Paul Veronese, in the National Gallery in London.)

with the boats he had used on the Indus, carried on wagons in sections. It was impossible, however, to make a bridge of boats like that over the Indus. That river had not been in flood; but the Jhelum was in flood, and, moreover, there was the army of Porus to prevent bridge building. Alexander might have waited till the rains were over and the river ran low in October. His army might then have forded it. But if he did this there was no knowing what would happen in the meantime. His Indian allies might desert him. Kings from farther east might come to the help of Porus. He did keep Porus in suspense by collecting great quantities of provisions, as though he meant to stay on his own side of the river for some time. But he seems to have determined to cross it as soon as possible.

And so these two great armies lay opposite one another with the river, about half a mile wide, between. They could see what one another was doing. The Indians could make out Alexander's tent and bodyguards, and perhaps even sometimes see Alexander himself. The Yavanas could see the opposite bank covered with soldiers, in the midst of which, like so many castles, stood the huge elephants. The mahouts excited the elephants so that they kept up a constant trumpeting. The Yavanas by this time knew something about elephants, but they still thought them very terrible beasts.

Alexander did all he could to keep Porus from guessing what he meant to do. He constantly kept his men moving up and down the river

bank, and even through the noise of the rain in the darkness of night the Indians could hear words of command and the Yavana battle-songs and the movements of cavalry on the opposite shore. They were always expecting an attack, and could not imagine whence it would come.

At length Alexander made a plan for the attack. He ordered his general, Craterus, to remain with the camp opposite Porus, and to ride up and down, and make believe that he meant to try to cross the river. *Alexander crosses the Jhelum* He also ordered that his own tent should be left standing with his bodyguard on duty, and even directed one of his officers, who was not unlike himself when seen at a distance, to wear the royal robes and show himself in front of the tent. Meanwhile Alexander marched the rest of the army about seventeen miles along the river to a place where there was an island covered with forest, which would prevent the Indians seeing what took place on the opposite bank. Here Alexander had collected a large number of boats, and here he determined to cross the river.

When all was ready for the attempt a great storm arose with torrents of rain, which made the Greeks desert their boats and fly to the camp for shelter. The rain ceased as suddenly as it began; but so thick were the clouds that it was almost too dark for men conversing to see each other's faces. But Alexander would not let this spoil his plans. He ordered that the army should embark in silence, and went himself in the first boat with his generals. The boats had to come

round the island, and were then seen by Indian watchers, who as soon as possible warned Porus. Moreover, when the troops had landed it was found that they were, after all, not on the mainland, but that there was still in front of them a deep channel. For some time no ford could be found; but at last one was discovered, where men could struggle through with the water breast high. And so the army got across.

When Porus heard of the landing he was puzzled what to do. He still had Craterus opposite him, with a strong Macedonian force, so he dared not leave that point un-
Defeat of Porus's son
 defended. He therefore kept most of his army where it was, and sent against Alexander his son with two thousand men and a hundred and twenty chariots. Alexander sent first against this force the horsemen from Central Asia, and followed himself at the head of his Macedonian cavalry. The prince's force was not strong enough to meet this attack. The chariots proved useless, as their wheels stuck fast in the soft ground, and the young prince was killed, with large numbers of his men.

When Porus heard the news he moved almost his whole army against Alexander. It is difficult to know exactly what happened in the battle that followed. It was begun by the mounted archers from Central Asia, followed up by the Macedonian horse. The
The battle with Porus
 Indians could not get a firm rest for their long bows in the rain-soaked ground. The foot-soldiers were driven in among the

elephants, which were as destructive to their own side as to the enemy. The chariots were urged at full speed into the midst of the battle. But it would be hard to say which side suffered most from this charge; for, while the Macedonian foot-soldiers were trampled down, the charioteers were hurled from their seats when the chariots jolted over the broken and slippery ground. Some of the horses took flight, and overturned the chariots, not only into the mud and pools of water, but even into the river itself. The battle became a rout. And then it was found that Craterus had succeeded also in crossing the river, so that the fugitives were faced by numbers of fresh troops.

Porus fought in the battle with the greatest bravery. He was mounted on a huge elephant, and was clad in armour from head to foot, but with his right shoulder bare.

Porus in the battle

As I have said, he was a huge man. It is said that his breastplate was twice the size of that of an ordinary man. He was as strong as he was big, and hurled darts with the force of a catapult. When he saw that the battle was going against him he gathered round him forty of the elephants, and with these and the darts he hurled made great slaughter. But he was easy to shoot at, with his great height and riding so huge an elephant, and he was soon wounded by a dart. Moreover, the Yavanas had found out how to overcome the elephants. They attacked them with a storm of darts; they hacked their feet with axes and their trunks with curved swords.

No wonder that the elephants retreated. Porus, left almost alone, turned to leave the field.

Soon a man came galloping after him. It was Ambhi, Rajah of Takshasilā. Porus hurled at him his last javelin, which, one historian says, pierced him from back to chest. One would like to know that Ambhi perished thus, but apparently he was not struck by the dart, and rode back to Alexander. Then Alexander sent other horsemen, among whom was a man whom Porus considered a friend.



COIN SHOWING AMBHI AND THE
JAVELIN.

Porus was by this time exhausted, and suffering terribly from thirst; so, when he heard this man's message, he dismounted, and having refreshed himself with water, was conducted to Alexander.

Alexander was greatly impressed by the appearance of Porus, not only because of his great height, six and a half feet, but because he advanced to meet the Macedonian king as one brave man should meet another after doing his utmost in defence of his kingdom. Alexander was the first to speak, and asked Porus how he wished to be treated. Porus replied, "Treat me, O Alexander! as befits a

*Porus and
Alexander*

king." "For my own sake, O Porus! thou shalt be so treated; but do thou in thine own behalf ask for whatever boon thou pleasest." To which Porus replied that in what he had asked everything was included. Alexander was more delighted than ever with this answer, and not only appointed Porus to govern his own Indians, but gave him much more land to rule over.

(4) THE MACEDONIANS MUTINY

Alexander performed sacrifices and held games to celebrate his victory. Then he had traced out on the field of battle a new city, to be called Nicæa—the "City of Victory." *Nicæa and Bucephala founded* At the spot from which he had crossed the Jhelum he determined to build another city, to be called Bucephala, after the name of his famous horse, Bucephalus. Bucephalus is said to have carried Alexander in the thick of the fight, and when the king's life was in danger the horse, though covered with wounds, just managed to carry his master out of the battle, and then sank gently to the ground and died. But I am afraid I must tell you that this is not true. Alexander did not ride Bucephalus in the battle, and the horse simply died of old age.

Now that Porus had become Alexander's friend there was no ruler in the Punjab powerful enough to withstand him. *Alexander advances towards Magadha* Alexander crossed the Chenāb, and gave the dominions of the other Paurava, Porus's relation, to Porus. He then advanced across the Rāvi

to the Beas. If he had crossed this he would have had only one more river of the Indus system to pass, the Sutlej. He would then have been in the plains of the Jumna and the Ganges, which led down to the great kingdom of Magadha. Alexander had been told of this kingdom, and that the Ganges country was fertile and well governed. Its inhabitants had, moreover, a greater number of elephants than the other Indians, and these of superior size and courage. He was eager to extend his conquests as far as the Eastern Sea, and seems to have thought that he would then be ruler of the whole inhabited earth.

The Macedonians and their allies were, however, tired out. They were thousands of miles from home. They had marched, regardless of burning heat, bitter cold, and deluges of rain, over sandy deserts, high mountains, and treacherous swamps. They had fought many battles and taken many towns. "Was there," they said, "to be no end to their toils and dangers?" They began to hold meetings, in which some lamented their condition, and others, the more violent, declared that they would follow no farther, though Alexander himself should lead the way. Alexander summoned his officers, and made a great speech to them, promising that if they would continue to follow him he would restore those that wished it to their homes, and provide splendidly for those who chose to stay in India. "Those who remain here," he said, "I will make objects of envy to those who go back." He was answered by one of the officers, who advised

*He is opposed
by his army*

Alexander for his own sake to return, and not to try to make more conquests with an army that had lost so many men from battle and disease, and was so unwilling to follow him. Alexander was enraged; he retired to his tent to give the army time to change their minds. After three days, during which he saw no one, he understood from the deep silence throughout the camp that there was no chance of their doing this. He then offered sacrifices for the passage of the river. The

Alexander yields to the army omens were against it, and Alexander summoned his officers again, and told them that he had determined to march

back. Great was the rejoicing, and the officers praised Alexander, because by them, and by them only, he had allowed himself to be overcome. Alexander recrossed the Rāvi and the Chenāb, and returned to the banks of the Jhelum.

You may think he did not keep his promise very well when I tell you that, instead of going back the way he had come through Afghanistan, he determined to sail down the Jhelum into the Indus, and so return by sea. You will see a little further on how far the Macedonians were from being at the end of their fighting, toils, and hardships.

(5) ALEXANDER LEAVES INDIA

Alexander got together a great fleet of boats

Alexander starts down the Jhelum for the voyage down the rivers, many of them rowed by thirty men each.

On the appointed day he placed himself in the prow of his boat, and poured from a

golden bowl offerings of wine to the gods of the rivers of the Punjab and to his own gods. Then a trumpet sounded, and the fleet set out. The noise of so many oars striking the water at the same time and of the songs of the rowers and the shouts of the officers giving orders was tremendous. Where the river passed through ravines the echoes flying to and fro between the banks made it all the greater. Everything was, however, carried out in good order. The boats had to keep a fixed distance from each other. On the banks marched part of the army, including the elephants, which by this time numbered two hundred. Many of the horses were carried in the boats, which greatly astonished the Indians, who had never before seen horses in boats.

On the tenth day the place was reached where the Chenāb joins the Jhelum. Below this, between the Chenāb and the Rāvi, and between that river and the Sutlej, were ^{*He is nearly killed*} tribes that had determined to resist Alexander. Alexander, leading a body of horse across the desert, made a sudden attack on a city of one of these tribes, and captured it. In an attack on another city he was in great danger. The inhabitants had taken refuge in the citadel, and scaling ladders were brought to attack it. The men who carried them were not quick enough for Alexander, who snatched one of the ladders from its bearer, placed it against the wall, and began to climb up, covering himself with his shield. He reached the top almost alone; and the soldiers behind, in their eagerness to follow



ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

Alexander proceeded down the Indus to the great city of Pattala, where the river divided into two branches. He found the city deserted by its inhabitants, who had fled when they heard he was coming.

*Alexander at
Pattala*

Many of them were, however, persuaded to come back. Before this the army had been divided, about a third with all the elephants being sent home under Craterus by way of Kandahar. From Pattala Alexander made an expedition down the western branch of the river, and sailed a little way into the sea. The Greeks were greatly astonished by the tides in the Arabian Sea, as up to this time they had only known the Mediterranean, where there are no tides. Returning to Pattala, he explored in the same way the eastern branch of the river. He had the idea of making the Indus a great highway for commerce, with cities on its banks, with docks and warehouses.



*His march
through
Baluchistan*

He had, however, not quite forgotten his promise to lead the Macedonians back home. His plan was to send the fleet along the coast to the Persian Gulf, and to march overland himself through the southern part of what is now Baluchistan. Accordingly, in September 325 B.C. he marched out

of Pattala. The march was harder than he had expected. There were mountain ranges to be crossed, and to avoid these he had to go farther inland than he intended. The country was for the most part sandy desert. The sand was heaped up in loose ridges, into which men, horses, and mules sank as they would in walking in mud or untrodden snow. The heat was also intense, and places where there was water far from one another, so that the army had to make very long marches, mostly by night. It was the time of the south-west monsoon, but the rain clouds passed over this sandy desert, to break on the mountains to the north. This caused sudden floods in the streams; and once, when the army was encamped on the banks of a stream, so much rain fell in the mountains that the stream came down in a sudden flood in the middle of the night. Most of the women and children of the camp followers were swept away, and the royal baggage and the remaining mules and oxen.

When the army did reach water, they drank so greedily that it is said that some soldiers killed themselves. Alexander consequently used to encamp a mile and a half from the watering-place, to prevent the men and beasts pushing in crowds to the water, which was not only dangerous to their lives; but led to the spoiling of the water by their trampling in it.

It was during this march that Alexander performed what has been called the noblest action of his life. He was ploughing *The noblest action of his life* through the sand on foot at the head of his army suffering greatly from thirst, and the next watering-place was still far off. Some soldiers

who had strayed from the main body found a little dirty water in a hole in a torrent bed, and brought it to him as a precious gift. He took it, and thanked the men who brought it, but at once poured it upon the ground in the sight of all. This action, proving that the king was willing to share all the hardships the soldiers had to endure, inspirited them as much as if he had given to every man a draught of fresh water.

Meanwhile the fleet made its way along the coast, constantly putting in to receive the supplies of food that Alexander sent from the *The "Fish Eaters"* land. Many strange peoples were met with. Those on the coast the Greeks called "Fish Eaters." These people lived in huts made of heaped-up shells roofed with backbones of fish. Other huts were made of the bones of whales, with the jawbones making arched doorways. During this march Alexander was already outside India. He eventually got to the mouth of the Tigris and to Babylon, where he died in 323 B.C.

Alexander had hoped to add India to his empire, and when he left it he supposed that he had made arrangements that would keep it under him. He had made Ambhi and Porus kings over all the Punjab. He had left Macedonian governors in the cities he had founded. He had treated with kindness all those who had submitted to him, and he had done his utmost to inspire terror by killing or selling as slaves those who opposed him. There was one part of the Indian people that never gave in to him, or thought him anything

but a vulgar conqueror suffering, as kings so commonly do, from earth hunger. These were the Brāhmanas, and particularly the Brāhman ascetics.

(6) THE BRĀHMANAS AND ALEXANDER

The Greeks in their own country gave great honour to philosophers, lovers of wisdom. When Alexander heard that in India there were people who despised pleasure *Alexander and Kalānos* and luxury, and gave themselves up to meditation, he very much wished to learn what their doctrine was. When he was at Takshasilā he therefore sent one of his officers to invite a noted yogi to come and see him. This yogi the Greeks called Kalānos. This was not his name, but merely something like the Sanskrit word he used as a salutation. The Macedonian officer found Kalānos lying naked on a bed of stones. Kalānos laughed at the helmet, cloak, and long boots of the Yavana, and invited him to strip and lie down beside him on the stones, when he would explain his philosophy. The oldest and wisest of the sages, one Mandanes, rebuked Kalānos and praised Alexander, because, although he was so great an emperor, he wished to obtain wisdom. "He is the only philosopher in arms," he said, "I ever heard of." He refused to go to Alexander, however. But in the end Kalānos was persuaded to go, and he remained with Alexander for some years, and there was great friendship between them. Although when Kalānos joined

Alexander he was an old man, he had always been in the best of health. When he arrived with Alexander at Persepolis, however, he became unwell. He therefore asked Alexander to prepare for him a funeral pyre, and to order it to be set on fire as soon as he should ascend it. Alexander very unwillingly consented. Kalānos then embraced his friends, but would not so take leave of Alexander, saying that he would meet him at Babylon and there embrace him. After Alexander's death at Babylon this was taken to have been a prophecy. Kalānos ascended the pyre, and it was lighted. Having lain down, he remained absolutely motionless till his sufferings were ended by death.

*Death of
Kalānos*

The Greek writers have preserved many wise sayings of the Brāhmans. This is one. Some were seen walking in a meadow, and stamping upon the ground as they walked. When Alexander asked the meaning of this, the reply was, "O King Alexander, each man possesses as much of the earth as what we have stepped on. But you, being a man like the rest of us, have come so far from home to plague yourself and everybody else; and yet ere long you, when you die, will possess just so much of the earth as will make a grave to cover your bones."



THE TRIUMPH OF ALEXANDER.

(From the painting by the French artist, Charles le Brun, in the Louvre, Paris.)

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VII. THE HINDU EMPIRES

(1) CHANDRAGUPTA, THE FIRST MAURYA

ALEXANDER'S invasion was not a very important event in Indian history. I have told you so much about it because I hope you will find it interesting, and will, at anyrate, like to know as much as possible about Porus. It comes at the beginning of the great period of Indian history, that of the Hindu empires. If I tried to tell you all about these this book would be turned into a history of India, and this is not what it is meant to be. I shall therefore try to tell only some of the most striking things about the rise and fall of the empires of the Mauryas, the Guptas, and of Harsha. The history of these empires extends over many centuries. From the time of Chandragupta, the first of the Maurya emperors, to Harsha is, in fact, about nine centuries.

*Length of
the period*

When Alexander turned back from the Beas the kingdom of Magadha was by far the greatest in India. Its capital was Pātaliputra, the modern Patna. This city was founded by the grandson of Ajātasatru, who murdered his father, Bimbisara, the friend of Buddha. By the time of Alexander, Magadha included at least what are now the United Prov-

*The kingdom
of Magadha*

inces, Behar, and Bengal, and perhaps also the country between the Great Indian Desert and the Vindhya Mountains. When Alexander died, the King of Magadha was Dhana-Nanda. He was no Kshatriya, but a low-caste man, and is even said to have been the son of a barber. The commander-in-chief of his army was Chandragupta Maurya. He is said to have been of the Sākiyas, the race from which Buddha came. His name Maurya means "Son of Murā," that being the name of his mother, and he was some family connection of Dhana-Nanda's. He quarrelled with the king, and became fast friends with the Brāhman Kautilya. This is the celebrated author of the *Arthasāstra*, a book which gives an account of how India was governed in his time. Acting on his advice, Chandragupta made war on Nanda, and invaded Magadha from the north-east. He seems to have been helped by Porus, who ruled the Eastern Punjab. Anyhow, he defeated and killed Nanda, and occupied Pātaliputra. Then, no doubt, his allies wanted to be rewarded for the help they had given. But Kautilya contrived that Porus should be murdered, and that the others should quarrel among themselves. The end of it was that the son of Porus retired in peace to his own dominions, but had to acknowledge Chandragupta as emperor.

Chandragupta

*The sad end
of Porus*

*Extent of
the Maurya
Empire*

The Maurya Empire by the beginning of the third century B.C. extended beyond the Hindu Kush on the north, and beyond Herat in the north-west—that is, it included not



COIN OF SELEUCUS.

only most of Northern India, but Afghanistan and part of Baluchistan as well.

After Alexander's death the Persian Empire remained under Macedonian rule. When Alexander embarked with his generals to cross the Jhelum to attack Porus, among them was Seleucus. This man became Emperor of Persia, and his dominions were bounded on the east by Chandragupta's. Seleucus decided on an invasion of India, and marching down the Kabul River, he crossed the Indus. Now Chandragupta had an army of half a million men, with nine thousand elephants and many chariots, and Seleucus seems to have realized that to conquer India and govern it from Babylon was more than he could manage. The war was one without a battle, and the two emperors made a treaty by which Chandragupta obtained the countries beyond the Indus mentioned above. The Seleucid and the Maurya dynasties remained friendly neighbours. One result of this was that Seleucus sent the Greek Megasthenes to be his ambassador

*Relations with
the Empire
of Seleucus.*

cocks and pheasants. There were shady groves and trees in groups, the branches of which clever gardeners wove together. These trees were always green, not bare in winter, as they mostly are in Europe. Some of them were natives to India; others brought from other lands with great care. Many birds, parrots and others, were in the park, not in cages, but coming of their own accord, and nesting and roosting in the trees." There were also, says Megasthenes, "lovely tanks made by the hands of men, with fishes in them very large and gentle, and nobody may catch them except the sons of the king, when they are yet children. In this water, as tranquil and safe as any can be, they fish and play and learn to swim all at the same time."

The city streets were thronged by people in many-coloured clothes, with ornaments of ivory, gold, and gems, and shoes of white leather. The richer were followed by slaves carrying umbrellas.

Since there were so many towns, roads going from one to another were the more necessary.

*Roads and
milestones* These were constructed by the king's officers, and there were signposts showing the turnings and giving distances just as we see to-day on roads in India and in Europe.

Government In a country with so many cities and well-kept roads we should expect to find a very complete system of government. And so there was in the Maurya Empire. Under the emperor there were rajahs still ruling the dominions they once had governed independently.

There were in Magadha itself also governors of provinces. The emperor had officers of different classes, each class attending to a particular kind of business. The first were like modern commissioners and collectors. They had to look after irrigation and land measurements, forests, mines, and roads. The second did the work now done by municipal councils, and some things that even municipal councils do not do now. They supervised factories and cared for strangers. To do this properly they had control of inns. If any stranger were sick these officers had to provide a doctor and medicine for him, and bury him if he died. They also registered births and deaths. They controlled the markets, seeing that the things offered for sale were good and the price fair, and that second-hand things were not offered as being new. They also collected a tax of ten per cent. on sales. The third class of officers looked after the army, forming what would now be called the War Office.

Although the towns were so important the greater part of the population lived by agriculture, and the principal tax was the land tax. There were, however, many *The people* craftsmen and merchants, and professional men. Among the latter were doctors, actors, singers, dancers, reciters, and soothsayers.

Merchants had to pay all sorts of taxes: road taxes and tolls, and taxes when entering a province or a city. They had to have passports, and were severely punished if their passports were not in order. Prices were fixed by the emperor's

officers, and if things were sold at higher prices than those fixed, the balance had to be paid into the treasury. The emperor himself carried on trade, and had his own factories and workshops. Prisoners in the jails were made to work, and the things they made were sold, and the emperor took the profit.

Over all the officers of the empire were the emperor and his ministers. The duties of these were the same as those of ministers *The emperor's ministers* in all governments to-day. Using modern names, we may say that the Maurya emperors had their Prime Ministers, Ministers for War, Home Secretaries, and so on.

There were many public offices, with crowds of clerks in them. I suppose that they went to their *Public offices* offices in Pātaliputra every morning just as they now do in Delhi. They had to be kept hard at work, and if they were idle were fined. There was fear lest officers should steal the public money. It was said, "Just as a fish moving under water cannot possibly be found either as drinking or not drinking water, so officers employed in government work cannot be found out while taking government money for themselves." Everything possible was done to find out whether any fish did drink the water. The accounts were very carefully kept. Revenue and expenditure were arranged under heads, very much as at present. All this must have meant a great deal of writing and keeping of records.

It is clear that people in these very early times were quite accustomed to writing. Not only did

the emperor and the ministers write letters to one another, but private people too. There were rules about the letters written by officials. They had to be very polite, so that no one should be offended by the way he was addressed. There was a postal system, and letters were taken along the roads by officers appointed for the purpose.

Writing

The hardest worked man in the empire was the emperor. The twelve hours of the day were divided into eight parts, and also those of the night. The emperor had something to do in each of these parts except two in the middle of the night, which he had for sleep, and one or two in the day for his meals and recreation.

The emperor's day

The people were not wholly given up to work and business. There were plenty of amusements. Actors, dancers, and singers visited even the villages, and halls were often maintained in villages for their entertainments. The king had theatres for acting, gymnastic contests, and fights of men and animals. There was even an entertainment that makes one think of the cinema, the showing of pictures of objects of curiosity.

Amusements

By the time of the Maurya Empire Hindu law had greatly developed. It was the business of the Brāhmins to know and explain the law, and in the law courts the judges were three officials helped by three learned Brāhmins, just as there are now in the Indian high courts civilian and barrister judges. But people

Law

were not fond of going to law. They were very truthful and honest, and a man's word was enough without a stamped written agreement. When Megasthenes was with Chandragupta's army of half a million men there were very few cases of theft, and none of more than about one hundred and twenty rupees.

Social customs were much the same as they are to-day. Sati was practised, however, and I give here a beautiful account by a Greek writer of a Sati. The leader of a band of Indians was killed while fighting for the Greeks in Persia. He left two wives, both of whom claimed the right to die on his funeral pyre. The question was put before the Greek generals, and they decided in favour of the younger wife. The elder went away lamenting and rending her hair, and the younger went exultant to the pyre clothed as though for a bridal, and wearing all her jewels. When she came near the pyre she took off her jewels and distributed them to her relations and friends for memorials. She was then helped by her brother on to the pyre. Before the pyre was lighted the whole army marched round it three times. Meanwhile she lay down beside her husband, and as the fire seized her she allowed no sound of suffering to escape her lips. Thus she ended her life in heroic fashion amidst the praises of the spectators of her virtue and the pity of many.

(2) ASOKA

The grandson of Chandragupta was the cele-



A SOUTH INDIAN TEMPLE.

haviour towards Brāhmans and ascetics, obedience to mother and father, and to elders. They were also more opposed to taking life and ill-usage of any living creature. From this you see that, although Asoka was a Buddhist, he favoured all people who were good and pious, whatever their belief might be.

In another edict he considers how the growth of piety might be improved, and decides that it might be done by instructions in piety. One way was by the carving of inscriptions. "Pillars of piety were made by me," says the edict. Another way was to order the king's officers to do everything possible to cause piety to increase. Another was by appointing a number of special officers to teach piety.

The emperor also mentions what he had done to set a good example. "On the roads also ban-
How he set a yans were planted to give shade to
good example cattle and men; mango gardens were planted; and, at each half koss wells were dug; also rest-houses were made; many watering-places were also made in this and that place for the comfort of cattle and men." He explains that men must not think too much of their comfort, however, but piety is shown by caring for the comforts of other people. Another good example was that of arrangements made for giving alms both on the king's account and also the queen's. It is not surprising if we think of Asoka as a saint even more than as a great emperor.

He did not neglect his duties as a ruler, however. One thing that he was particularly interested in



A SOUTH INDIAN TEMPLE.

was the welfare of the people on the borders of the empire. Many of these, particularly in the south, were hill tribes who were much less civilized than the rest of his people. This is what he says in an edict carved on a rock in the Ganjam district :—

*Asoka and
the people on
the borders*

“ If you ask, ‘ With regard to the unsubdued borderers, what is the king’s command to us ? ’ or, ‘ What truth is it that I desire the borderers to grasp ? ’ the answer is that the king desires that ‘ they should not be afraid of me, that they should trust me, and should receive from me happiness not sorrow.’ Moreover, they should grasp the truth that the king will bear patiently with us, so far as it is possible to bear with us, and that ‘ for my sake they should follow the Law of Piety, and so gain both this world and the next.’ And for this purpose I give you instructions.”

It was greatly owing to Asoka that Buddhism spread over Asia, so that it became the religion of many millions of men. The Buddhists found it difficult to agree about their doctrines. There were eighteen different sects among them. A great council was held at Pātaliputra to settle these differences, and it seems to have had some success. It sat for nine months, and after it was over we find Asoka sending out Buddhist missionaries to places outside his dominions. Among these were Kashmir, the Yavana country, Farther India, and the kingdoms of Southern India. To Ceylon he sent his own son and daughter, who were a monk and a nun. They converted the King of Ceylon and his

*How Asoka
spread
Buddhism*

people, and Ceylon has ever since been a Buddhist country.

Asoka is greatly famed as a builder of Buddhist shrines, and many of these are described by the Chinese pilgrims who visited India centuries after his death. He had a stone railing erected round the Bo-tree under which Buddha had attained enlightenment, and put up a pillar to mark the place of his birth. He founded the city of Srinagar in Kashmir. He reigned for thirty-six or thirty-seven years, and died about 237 B.C.

(3) THE SINGHAS AND KUSHĀNS

In one of Asoka's edicts he says that his sons and grandsons and great-grandsons will foster pious observance to the end of time, and that, standing fast by piety and morality, they will inculcate piety. This pious hope was not fulfilled. The Maurya dynasty only lasted some fifty years after Asoka's death, and was followed by that of the Singhas, the first of whom, Pushyamitra, was a great persecutor of Buddhists, and can have done nothing for piety as Asoka understood it.

of the Maurya Empire. The Sungas had to fight both the Yavanas and the Andhras. Menander was ambitious. Alexander had turned back at the Beas, Seleucus at the Indus; Menander determined to outdo them both by conquering India. He was in the end defeated and driven back to his own dominions by Pushyamitra.

Before this happened Pushyamitra *Pushyamitra's horse sacrifice* had celebrated the ancient ceremony of the horse sacrifice. The nature of the ceremony was this. A carefully-chosen horse was turned loose to wander for a year, and was followed wherever he went by the king or his general with an army. If the horse chanced to enter a foreign country its ruler was bound to fight the army. If the army was victorious, the horse was brought back, a great festival was held, and the horse was sacrificed. King Pushyamitra chose a horse of the proper colour, let it loose, and appointed his young grandson, Vasumitra, with a hundred Rajputs as its guard. The horse wandering on the right bank of the Sindhu * River, was claimed by a body of Yavana cavalry. Vasumitra and his Rajputs attacked and defeated them, and rescued the horse, which was brought back to Pātaliputra and duly sacrificed. These events are described in a play by Kālidāsa, who gives a letter from Pushyamitra describing them, and inviting his son and heir to dismiss anger from his mind, and without delay to come with his wives to behold the sacrifice.

* There were several rivers of this name. It is not known which of them is meant, but it was not the Indus.

It was after the end of the Sunga dynasty that the Andhras attacked Magadha. Perhaps for a time they even ruled over it. Meanwhile another power was rising up *Tribes from Central Asia* that was destined to threaten Magadha.

The great plains north of the Himalaya were inhabited by wandering tribes who did not cultivate but roamed from place to place seeking pasture for their horses, cattle, and sheep. In the second century B.C. one of these tribes succeeded in driving another, the Yueh-chi, to find new pasture grounds. They went westward from North-Western China, nearly a million of them, men, women, and children, the men armed with bows that no doubt they shot from their horses' backs. You will remember that Alexander had people of this kind in his army, and that they began the attack on the son of Porus. In the course of about a century the Yueh-chi had settled down and founded a permanent kingdom to the north of the Hindu Kush. They became so powerful that they even made war on the Emperor of China, but were completely defeated. After this they attacked India, and about A.D. 100 extended their power all over North-Western India, probably as far as Benares. They were ruled by a line of kings known as the Kushān dynasty, which lasted for nearly two centuries.

The best-known king of this dynasty was Kanishka. This king began life as *Kanishka* a great warrior and conqueror. His capital was at Peshawar, and he is said to have carried his conquests as far as Pūtaliputra itself.

Later he became a Buddhist, and his conversion, like Asoka's, is said to have been caused by remorse for the blood shed during his wars. He also, like Asoka, held a great council of learned Buddhists. Five hundred assembled at a monastery in Kashmir. They produced a long account of Buddhist doctrines, and this was engraved on sheets of copper and buried under a Buddhist shrine. These copper sheets have not so far been found—perhaps some day they may be.

Kanishka, though he so favoured the Buddhists, was still troubled with earth hunger, if we may believe the story of his death, which *Kanishka's death* is as follows:—

“The king had a minister named Māthara, of unusual intelligence. He addressed Kanishka in these words: ‘Sire, if you wish to follow the advice of your servant, your power will assuredly bring the whole world into subjection. All will submit to you, and the eight regions will take refuge in your merit. Think over what your servant has said, but do not divulge it.’ The king replied, ‘Very well, it shall be as you say.’ Then the minister called together the able generals and equipped a force of the four arms.* Wherever the king turned all men bowed before him like herbage under hail. The peoples of three regions came in to make their submission; under the hoofs of the horse ridden by King Kanishka everything either bent or broke. The king said, ‘I have subjugated three regions; all men have

* Horse and foot soldiers, chariots, and elephants.

to the throne, he ruled a fertile and prosperous kingdom, including the modern Behar, Oudh, and Tirhoot.

He was succeeded by his son, Samudra-gupta, who took the title of Vikramaditya, "Son of Power." This king was a great conqueror, and he caused an account of his conquests in Sanskrit verse to be carved on one of the pillars set up by Asoka, bearing edicts on the duty of piety. In this account the king is said to have waged wars of four different kinds: first, against the eleven kings of the south; second, against nine kings of Āryavarta; third, against the wild forest tribes; fourth, against frontier tribes and kingdoms. He *seems first to have conquered much of the territory* included in the Maurya Empire, but in the north-west his rule only extended to the Chenāb River. He made a great plundering expedition to the south, advancing down the east coast as far as Conjeeveram, now in the Madras Presidency, and on his way home traversed the Deccan and the modern Mahratta country. He does not claim to have added the eleven kingdoms of the south to his empire. The kings of the north he "uprooted"; those of the south he overcame in battle, but did not try to keep permanently in subjection. He brought back with him, however, rich booty of gold and jewels. In two years his army marched two thousand miles, and his exploits have with reason been compared with those of the great conquerors of the world, Alexander and Napoleon.

Next to Chandra-gupta II. came Kumara-gupta I., who reigned till the middle of the fifth

The Huns century A.D., and was succeeded by Skanda-gupta. In his time India was

first troubled by the Huns. We have seen how the Yueh-chi from the great Central Asian plains first established themselves to the south of the Hindu Kush, and then under the Kushān kings extended their power over North-Western India.

The Huns, like the Yueh-chi, were wild tribes from Central Asia. They first wan-

*Their wars
with the
Chinese*

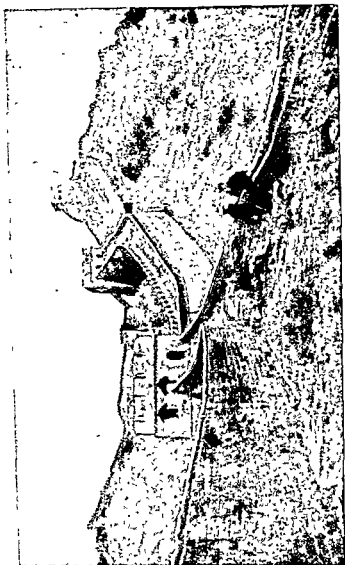
dered over the plains of Northern China, and gave great trouble to the

Chinese. The famous Great Wall of China, 1,400 miles long, was built to keep them out of the Chinese dominions. The Huns galloped over the plains, shooting off their arrows with deadly aim. The Chinese troops moved slowly, and the Great Wall proved little protection to them. One Chinese emperor had to surrender to the Huns. Chinese princesses were given in marriage to Hun chieftains. One of these ladies wrote some verses in which she lamented her exile. She was married, she said, to a Barbarian, sour milk was her drink, raw flesh her food, a tent her palace. She wished that she could be turned into a bird to fly back to her dear country.

The Huns were noted for their ugliness. They

*They invade
India* had broad flat faces and small black eyes deeply buried in the head, and hardly any hair on their faces. They

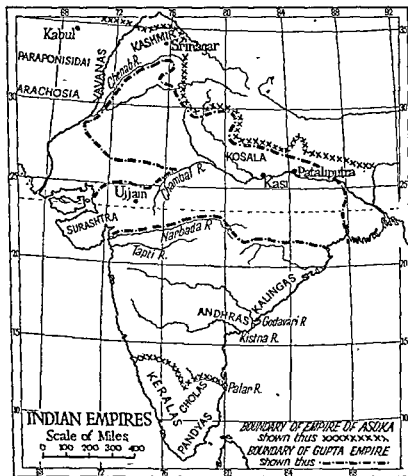
were very savage and cruel, and, of course, fearless fighters. They separated about A.D. 100 into



A PORTION OF THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA.

two bands, one going into Europe and the other into the valley of the Oxus. There they settled down, and became in time somewhat more civilized and even less hideous. They came to be known as the White Huns. They fought successfully against Persia, and later overthrew the Kushān kingdom of Kabul. Thence they came into India. The first invasion was driven back by Skanda-gupta. He erected a pillar, with a statue of Vishnu on the top of it, to celebrate his victory, which still stands in the Ghāzipur district of the United Provinces. Not long after, however, the invasion was renewed, and before the end of the fifth century the Huns had established a great kingdom in India, with its capital at the modern Siālkot. This was the end of the Gupta Empire. There were, however, many more Gupta kings of Magadha.

The best known of the kings of the Huns was Mihiragula. He was cruel and bloodthirsty, and brought misery to the Indian peoples over whom he ruled. At last his oppression became unbearable, and an Indian hero arose who put an end to it. This was Bālāditya, King of Magadha. He formed an alliance with Yasodharman, a rajah of Central India. They completely defeated Mihiragula and took him prisoner. Bālāditya was evidently not only a great warrior but a wise man. Instead of putting Mihiragula to death, he sent him home to his own country with all honour. This was much better than he deserved. He was a great enemy of the Buddhists, and they said that when



he died "there were thunder and hail and a thick darkness, and the earth shook, and a mighty tempest raged. And the holy saints said in pity, 'For having killed countless victims and overthrown the law of Buddha, he has now fallen into the lowest hell, where he shall pass endless ages of revolution.' " India was not further troubled by the Huns. They themselves, not long after the death of Mihiragula, were defeated by the Persians and the Turks. The Turks in turn overcame the Persians, and ruled the countries that had been subject to the Huns.

(5) HARSHA

I must tell you something about yet another empire in Northern India. Towards the end of the sixth century a rajah ruled in *The kingdom of Thāneswar* Thāneswar, in the ancient Kuru country. His mother was a Gupta princess, and perhaps this made him think of trying to revive the glories of the Gupta Empire. He warred with success against the neighbouring kingdoms, including the Mālavas and the Huns. When he died he was succeeded by his elder son. Hardly had this happened than the young king learnt that his sister's husband, the Rajah of *The Rani of Kanauj* Kanauj, had been slain by the King of the Mālavas. Moreover, this king had cruelly ill-treated the rani, "confining her like a brigand's wife, with a pair of iron fetters kissing her feet." The young King of Thāneswar immediately marched against the Mālavas, and

defeated them; but the Rajah of Central Bengal, having invited the Rajah of Thāneswar to a conference, treacherously murdered him. He was succeeded by his brother, Harsha.

Meanwhile, the poor lady who had been put in fetters by the King of the Mālavas had escaped, and had reached the forests of the Vindhya Mountains, where she had hidden herself. Harsha went in search of her, and was guided by the chiefs of the hill tribes to where his sister was living in hiding. She had given up all hope, and was on the point of burning herself and her attendants when her brother appeared. You see she must have been a very brave woman. She was also clever and learned. Harsha towards the end of his life greatly favoured Buddhism. The celebrated Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, came to India in his reign, and there were discussions in the presence of the king between Hiuen Tsang and other Buddhists. At one at least of these the widowed rani sat by Harsha's side, and was greatly pleased by Hiuen Tsang's lecture.

Harsha was a great warrior and conqueror. You will remember how Karna's chariot wheels stuck in the soft ground, and how in Alexander's battle with Porus the mud and pools of water hindered the chariots. *Harsha discards chariots* It is clear that they were only useful in dry weather and on smooth ground. Harsha seems to have seen this; at any rate, he gave up the use of chariots in war, so that from his time an Indian army ceases to consist of the four arms.

It is clear that he lost nothing by this change,

as he was very successful in war. He subdued so many rajahs that his empire was as large as the Guptas'. It did not, however, include quite the same countries. For instance, *Harsha's conquests and empire* Harsha ruled over the delta of the Ganges as far as the lower waters of the Brāhma-putra, but did not rule any part of the Punjab.

He tried to conquer the Deccan also, but failed. The Deccan was then ruled by the Chalukyas, and their king successfully defended his kingdom from all Harsha's attacks. His dominions, therefore, stopped at the Narbada River. In the next chapter I shall tell you something about Southern India. In Harsha's time the Pallavas were the ruling people south of the Deccan, and there were many wars between them and the Chalukyas, who once even captured Kānchi, the Pallavas' capital.

Harsha had his own way of ruling his empire. No doubt, like the Guptas and Mauryas, he had a civil service, but he took care that *Harsha's government* the members of it should do their duty by going himself constantly on tour. Where he halted he had a camp built of grass and reeds, which was burnt when he moved on to another place.

The government was strict. Evil-doers were severely punished. When they were put in prison "they were simply left to live or die, and were not counted among men." In earlier days you will remember prisoners in jails were put to work and the emperor took the profits of their work. People who behaved themselves must have prospered under Harsha. The taxes were light; the

land tax was one-sixth of the crop. People obliged to work for the government were paid wages. Harsha was at war more or less for thirty-five years, and you may think that this must have meant great misery for the countries where it was going on. But the fighting was done by soldiers who did nothing else. Each caste attended to its own business. When a battle was being fought farmers might be seen going on with their ploughing quite close to the battle-field.

Harsha did what he could for travellers, the poor, and the sick. There were rest-houses on the roads, where travellers could stay the night, and were provided with free meals. At these rest-houses were also to be found doctors and a good supply of medicines, so that the sick could be attended to free of charge.

Education was greatly valued, and widespread. The king set an example, being a man of learning himself. He wrote in Sanskrit a book on grammar, three dramas, and some poems. As I have said, he also was fond of discussions about religious doctrines. So that people might learn what Hiuen Tsang had to say about religion, King Harsha held a great assembly at Kamauj. At this there were present twenty rajahs and thousands of Brāhmans, Buddhist monks, and Jains. This great meeting was not without incident. A temporary monastery, made, I suppose, of grass and reeds, like Harsha's own camps, caught fire. Harsha had gone up to the top of a neighbouring tower, and was coming down when a man rushed up and tried to stab

*Harsha a
man of
learning*

him. The man was seized and questioned. He said that the monastery had been set on fire by Brāhmans who shot burning arrows at it, and hoped to kill the king in the confusion. Whether he spoke the truth or not, Harsha believed him, and many Brāhmans were exiled and some executed.

Hiuen Tsang describes another great assembly of King Harsha's. This was held at the modern Allahabad, where the rivers Ganges and Jumna meet, and on the ground where a great fair is still held every year.

*Harsha's
distribution
of wealth*

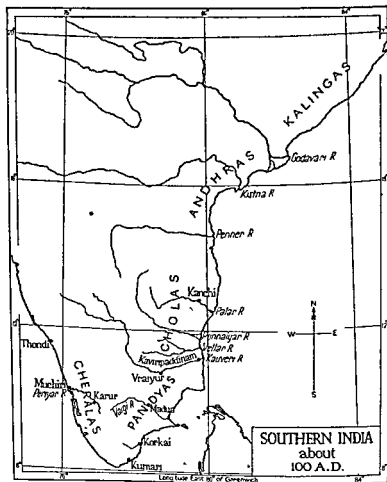
Harsha told Hiuen Tsang that it had long been the custom to hold an assembly there every five years, at which the king distributed to the poor and the religious all the wealth that had been saved during the previous five years. The assembly numbered half a million of poor people, and Buddhists, Brāhmans, and ascetics of every kind. It lasted for seventy-five days. There were first religious ceremonies in which both Buddha and Siva were worshipped. Then there was the distribution of wealth. All sects shared in this, but the Buddhists came off best. Each man of ten thousand of these received one hundred gold coins, a pearl, and a cotton garment, besides food, drink, flowers, and perfumes. In the end, except what was necessary for keeping up the army, the king had nothing left, and had to beg from his sister, the widowed rani, a second-hand cotton garment, which he put on, and in it worshipped and rejoiced that he had acquired religious merit by distributing his wealth.

Harsha died in A.D. 647.

VIII. SOUTH INDIA

So far I have said very little about Southern India. This is because little is known of its history in very early times. In one way at least, however, this must have been similar *The Dravidians* to that of the north. We have seen how the Aryans came into India on the north-west, and how they overcame the various peoples they found there, and in time spread over the whole country. Southern India has for ages been largely inhabited by people called Dravidians. There are still to be found there, as in Northern India, other less civilized races, such as the hill tribes on the Eastern and Western Ghats. It is pretty certain that the Dravidians came into South India as a conquering race much as the Aryans came into North India. Where they came from and how they came into India can never, perhaps, be certainly known. They must have come by land, and, therefore, probably from the north or north-west. Perhaps they came through Baluchistan into the plain of the Indus, and so down to the countries south of the Vindhya. This must have been before the Aryans came into India, and therefore so long ago that it is hardly worth while trying to say how many centuries must have passed since then.

At the earliest time at which we do know some-



thing about Southern India the Dravidians were, as at present, in three main divisions—the Andhras, the Kalingas, and the Tamils. I have already told you something about the first two.

You will remember that Asoka conquered the Kalingas, and that there was a time when the Andhra kingdom extended right across India, and that King Samudra-gupta fought against the eleven kings of the south. This last event happened in the middle of the fourth century. I now want to go back about two hundred and fifty years to the end of the first century (A.D. 100), and say a little about the Tamils of that time.

The Tamil country was then called Tamilakam, and included all that part of the Madras Presidency where Tamil is now spoken, and also Malabar and the states of Travancore and Cochin. At that time Malayalam had not become a separate language. Tamilakam was divided into three kingdoms, those of the Pāṇdyas, Chōlas, and Chēralas. The Pāṇḍya kingdom was in the south-east, the Chōla in the north-east, and the Chērala in the west. The capital of the Pāṇḍya kingdom was Madura, that of the Chōlas Uraiyur (Old Trichinopoly), and that of the Chēralas Karur, an ancient town on the Periyār River.

*The three
Tamil
kingdoms*

The most important thing to remember about the Tamils is that they lived for many centuries quite separated off from the rest of India. On the south-east and west there was the sea. On the north there were the other Dravidian peoples, the people of Maharashtra and the Andhras.

These peoples had their own languages, which, though not unlike Tamil, were distinct from it. As time went on the Dravidians attained a high degree of civilization, and no part of the Dravidian land was more civilized than the three kingdoms of Tamilakam.

I do not want you to think that no Aryans or people from Northern India came into Tamilakam.

*Aryans in
Tamilakam*

They certainly did come. There was on the banks of the Jumna a city called Mathura, celebrated as the birthplace of Krishna. Now you will see that the name of the capital of the Pāndya kingdom was nearly the same—Madura. Also the name of the kingdom itself must remind you of the Pāndavas. Why these names are so nearly the same is explained by the Tamil poets. There was a princess of the royal family of the Pāndavas ruling at Mathura, on the Jumna. She led a band of her subjects to Southern India. There she founded the new Mathura on the banks of the Vaigai—that is, Madura. She married a prince of the country, and their descendants were the Pāndya kings.

No doubt there were other settlements of Aryans in Tamilakam, and no doubt the people from North India helped the Tamils in becoming so civilized.

*Tamil
civilization*

Their civilization was shown in various ways. They made tanks and dug canals, so as to irrigate the country, and grew great quantities of rice and other crops. They built towns with splendid temples of the gods and palaces for their kings. They were great traders, and they were very fond of poetry and music.

If you look at the map you will see how necessary it was on the east coast to attend to irrigation. Through most of the year there is little rain, but in south-west *Irrigation* monsoon time there is much rain on the west coast and the Western Ghats, and the rivers come down in flood. Of these the greatest is the Cauvery, and the richest part of the Chōla kingdom was the delta of the Cauvery. The Pāndya kingdom was not so well off for rivers, but had more advantages from the south-west monsoon. The Chērala kingdom on the west coast had plenty of rainfall, and its rice-fields and cocoa-nut groves were even richer than those of the Cauvery delta.

Of the Tamil cities, Madura was the most famous. It was surrounded by walls built of great blocks of stone. It had four gates, *Tamil cities* each with a high tower. Beyond the wall was a deep moat, and beyond that a jungle of thorny trees. Yavana soldiers with drawn swords guarded the gates. The roads leading to these were each broad enough for three elephants. One of the streets leading from the gates was the royal street, another the market street. There were bazaars for the goldsmiths, corn dealers, cloth merchants, and jewellers. There was the great temple of Siva, known as the silver shrine, and other temples besides, and monasteries full of Buddhist and Brāhman ascetics.

In the Pāndya kingdom, although Uraiyur was the capital, Kāveripaddinam was perhaps larger and more important. In the first century the

great dam across the Cauvery had not been built, and the river was a broad and deep stream, into which ships could sail from the sea. Kāveripaddinam was on the northern bank of the river. It had a great market, planted with trees at regular intervals, a royal street, a car street, and a bazaar street, besides streets for different professions—merchants, farmers, doctors, and astrologers. The king had a palace here, and attached to the court were crowds of poets, musicians, actors, and buffoons. The palace was a magnificent building. Workmen from far-famed Magadha had been brought to help in building it, as well as Yavana carpenters. A poet says that the walls of the throne hall were covered with plates of polished gold, and that from the beams of the roof hung strings of pearls.⁶ Round the palace was a park like that of the Maurya palace at Magadha, with its shady trees and tanks. It was full of "short-legged quails and long-eared hares, leaping deer, and mountain goats." In so fine a city you may be sure the gods were not forgotten. It contained many splendid temples, besides seven monasteries containing three hundred Buddhist monks.

Down by the water were rows of godowns, the windows of which were said by a poet to be shaped like the eyes of deer. In these godowns were stored the goods landed from the ships. A tax had to be paid on them to the king, and after it was paid they were stamped with his tiger stamp. There were also close by the settlements of the Yavana merchants, who had always attractive things to sell. These Yavana settle-

Trade

ments may surprise you, and the Yavana soldiers at Madura. How they came to be in Tamilakam is explained in the next chapter.

The Tamils of these early times were very fond of poetry, and held poets in high honour. There was the custom for poets to assemble at the courts of kings to recite their poems. The king would give a prize or reward to the poet who did best, and no doubt this custom much encouraged the writing of poetry. The kings themselves were often poets, and other poets came from various castes, religions, and professions, Buddhists, Brāhmans, priests, merchants, doctors, farmers, and workmen. In the first century there were probably more than fifty Tamil poets. Among these the most celebrated was Val-luvar, the author of the *Kural*. He seems to have been a native of Mailapur, now part of Madras city,

*Poetry and
music*

other thing is the choice of a profession. Valluvar thought agriculture was best. "Those who till the ground are truly happy; all others live by serving and following the great." Valluvar greatly valued wisdom and knowledge. "The wise have all they want, but the ignorant, though having all, are ever poor." He thought that people should be kind to one another. "Dauntless valour is heroic, but far nobler than that is kindness to an unlucky being."

You may ask what sort of government the ancient Tamils had. Each kingdom had its king, and, like other Indian kings, his duty was to be a father to his people in time of peace, and lead them against their enemies in war. He could not, however, do just as he liked. There were in each kingdom five councils, called the Five Great Assemblies. First was that of the representatives of the people; its business was to see that the rights and privileges of the people were respected. The second was the assembly of priests; and this, of course, attended to all matters of religion, especially directing all religious ceremonies. The third was the assembly of the doctors; which looked after the health of the people. The fourth was that of the astrologers; and this fixed the proper times for important events, and predicted the future. The fifth was the assembly of the ministers—that is, of the king's principal officers; it had to collect the revenue and see that it was properly spent, and also to administer justice: it was, in fact, like the executive councils in India at the present

*Government
in the Tamil
kingdoms*

day. Each of these assemblies had its meeting-hall in the capital city. When the king held a durbar they all followed him in procession, and attended the durbar. It is unfortunate that we do not know more about these assemblies. We should like to know, for instance, whether the representatives of the people were elected.

The three Tamil kingdoms were often at war with one another, and sometimes one, sometimes another, was supreme. There came a time when a tribe or family of the *Later history of Tamilakam* name of Pallavas established a kind of empire in the Tamil lands. Who they were and where they came from is not certainly known. They were important in Southern India from the fourth to the eighth centuries. Their capital was Kānchi, the modern Conjeeveram. They ruled all Tamilakam for about two centuries. After their time the power of the Chōla kings revived, till in the tenth century we find a great Chōla Empire, including the whole of the present Madras Presidency and a great part of Mysore and Ceylon.

IX. COMMERCE AND SEAFARING

It is impossible to say when men first began to trade by carrying goods in ships from one country to another. Trade of this kind was *The beginning of commerce* certainly well known in Vedic times, as ships and merchants are mentioned in several hymns of the Rig-Veda. About the same time we know that King Solomon sent ships from the Red Sea to Ophir, which brought back gold and timber and precious stones. He also sent other ships to Tarshish, which came back every three years bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes and peacocks. We do not know where Tarshish and Ophir were; but it is quite likely that they were in Southern India, particularly as the Hebrew words for apes and peacocks are very like the Tamil words for the same creatures.

Now, in these old days sailors did not dare to go very far from land, and usually sailed along the coast. Sometimes, however, they *Early navigation* did get out of sight of land, and wanted to know how far off they were. Then they would set free a bird from cages they carried with them. If the bird came back they knew the land was too far off for it to fly to it. If it did not come back they knew that land was not very far off. If you know the story of Noah's flood

you will remember that this was what he did when he wanted to know whether the flood was going down. He sent out a dove from the ark, and she, finding no rest for the sole of her foot, came back. Seven days later he sent her out again, "and she came to him in the evening, and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off." So Noah knew that the flood had gone down enough to uncover the tops of the trees. After another seven days he sent out the dove again. She did not come back, so Noah knew that the flood had gone down.

But there was at least one journey for which sailors in very early times—perhaps three thousand years ago—dared to go out of sight of land. This was from the mouth of the Red Sea to the west coast of Southern India. It was found that ships could sail easily with the south-west monsoon across the Arabian Sea, and that there was in the winter a steady wind to bring them safely back. Perhaps Solomon's ships went this way.

Now let us get on a little from these very ancient days. In Buddhist times plenty of trade was carried on to and from India both by land and sea. Caravans went both east and west. They traversed deserts, going by night for the sake of coolness. They had "land pilots," who guided them through the darkness by the stars, just as pilots at sea guided their ships. Perhaps the deserts were those of Rajputana, and the caravans were bound for sea-ports on the western coast, whence goods could be conveyed in ships up the Persian Gulf, and so

Indian commerce in Buddhist times

to Babylon the Great. Benares was a great trading centre, and ships went from there and from Pātaliputra down the Ganges into the Bay of Bengal, and so to Ceylon and Southern Indian ports, and perhaps to China, and even across the Arabian Sea and into the Red Sea. The ships were of a good size. Some of them would contain many passengers. Merchants used to join together to hire a ship, and took much trouble to get a good pilot.

Passengers in ships had to face great dangers to themselves and their goods. In a storm they sometimes had the latter thrown overboard to lighten the ship. Sometimes they were shipwrecked, and fell among savages. This perhaps accounts for the following story.

*Dangers of
seafaring*

There was in Ceylon a goblin town inhabited by she-goblins. When a ship was wrecked these creatures used to take human form and come beautifully dressed with their children on their hips, bringing food for the shipwrecked merchants. By their magic the goblins would make the merchants see here and there men ploughing and herds of cattle, and so made them think that they were near a real city. The goblins also would tell the merchants that it was three years since their own husbands went on board ship, so that they must all have perished, and that the merchants could, therefore, become their husbands. They would in this way entice the merchants into the city, where they devoured them.

Sometimes when a voyage was not prosperous

it was supposed that some one on board was the cause of the ill-luck. There is a story of a ship which, after sailing for many days, suddenly stopped as though she had run upon a rock. They cast lots to see who brought the ill-luck, and seven times the lot fell upon a certain man. They therefore gave him a raft of bamboos and cast him overboard. The ship immediately went on.

Fa Hien, the Chinese pilgrim, was very near being cast overboard in this way. The ship he was in was nearly wrecked in a storm, and some Brāhmans on board said it was having a Buddhist on board that had brought ill-luck. A friend of Fa Hien, however, said he would report the matter to the king, who was a Buddhist, so the sailors were afraid to touch Fa Hien. The ship got to land when nearly all the food and water was gone.

Here is what Fa Hien says about the dangers of seafaring. "On the sea [between Ceylon and Java] there are many pirates, to meet with whom is speedy death. The great ocean spreads out a boundless expanse. There is no knowing east or west; only by observing the sun, moon, and stars was it possible to go forward. If the weather were dark and rainy the ship went as she was carried by the wind, without any definite course. In the darkness of the night only the great waves were to be seen, breaking on one another, and emitting a brightness like that of fire, with huge turtles and other monsters of the deep all around. The merchants were full of terror, not knowing where they were going. The sea was deep and bottom-

less, and there was no place where they could drop anchor and stop. But when the sky became clear they could tell east and west, and the ship again went forward in the right direction. If she had come on any hidden rock there would have been no way of escape."

Boats and ships were certainly being built in India at this time. There were evidently boats on the rivers when Alexander invaded the Punjab. He collected all of these he could, and in addition had many made which he had carried in sections from one river to another. You will remember how he carried his army in a great fleet down the Indus.

*Shipbuilding
in India*

About three hundred years later there was plenty of trade by sea between Southern India and Europe. By that time the Roman Empire had been established, and Rome was not only powerful, but prosperous and wealthy. Her rich men desired to have everything that could add to their luxury. Some of the things they wanted could only be got from India, so it became more and more profitable for European merchants to trade with India. Now one of the provinces of the empire was Egypt, and the trade route to India had long been, as it still is, through Egypt. You will remember that people had not yet found their way round the Cape of Good Hope. At first Greek ships sailed from Egypt down the Red Sea and as far as South Arabia. There they would meet with Arabian ships that had come from India.

*Trade with
Europe*

It was not till the first century A.D. that the

Greeks found out that by sailing with the south-west monsoon ships could go straight across the Arabian Sea to India. A certain pilot, named Hippalos, "by observing the positions of the ports and the general appearance of the sea," discovered this. He found that by leaving Egypt in the summer he got to India and back in the year. The Greeks called the south-west monsoon "Hippalos," in honour of this pilot.

One of the things the Romans most wanted was pepper, and this grew abundantly in the Chērala kingdom. So you see how good for trade Hippalos's discovery was. *The pepper trade* Hundreds of Yavana ships came across to Malabar every year, and a few even made their way round Cape Comorin to the mouths of the Ganges. The most celebrated Malabar port was called Muchiri. This was at the mouth of the Periyār River, and a Tamil poet speaks of "the thriving town of Muchiri, where the beautiful large ships of the Yavanas, bringing gold, come splashing the white foam on the waters of the Periyār, which belongs to the Chēralas, and return laden with pepper."

Pepper was not the only thing the Yavana ships took back to Egypt. The merchants also purchased great quantities of the best pearls, got by pearl divers on the coast *Other trade* opposite Ceylon. These divers were slaves, or criminals condemned to carry on this dangerous business. The pearl fisheries belonged to the King of the Pāṇdyas. Korkai, on the banks of the Tāmraparni River in Tinnevely, was its chief

seat, and here the crown prince lived to look after the pearl fisheries. There were other things besides pepper and pearls—ginger, spices such as cinnamon and cardamoms, precious stones, and fine muslin embroidered with pearls. Muchiri was, indeed, a busy seaport. A poet says, "Fish is bartered for paddy, which is brought in baskets to the houses; sacks of pepper are brought from the houses to the market; gold received from ships in exchange for articles sold is brought to shore in barges at Muchiri, where the music of the surging sea never ceases, and where the Chērala king presents to visitors the rare products of the sea and mountains."

Of course the Yavanas had to pay for these rare products, and they paid in gold. A Roman writer says that there was no year in which India did not drain the empire of gold to the value of at least seven crores of rupees, sending in return goods that were sold at Rome for a hundred times their value in India. Many gold coins of the Roman emperors have been found buried in different places in Tamilakam. The Yavanas brought other things as well. A poet says to a Pāndaya prince, "O prince, whose sword is ever victorious, spend thou thy days in peace and joy, drinking daily out of golden cups presented by thy hand-maids, the cool and fragrant wine brought by the Yavanas in their good ships."

Now although trade with Europe was carried on mostly in Yavana ships, Indian ships went to foreign countries from South Indian ports. These ships boldly crossed the Bay of Bengal to the



*Indian colonists
landing in
Java.*



mouths of the Ganges and Irrawaddy, and reached Burma and even Sumatra or Java.

A few centuries later Indian connection with Java became very close. To this day there are

India and in the middle of Java remains of great
Java Hindu temples and Buddhist shrines.

One of these at Borobudur is one of the wonders of the world from the beauty of the sculptures which illustrate the life of Buddha. Many of the pictures in this book are taken from drawings of these Borobudur sculptures, and they will help to remind you that in very early times Indians founded colonies in such a distant island as Java.

THE END